

# GCN

**Craig Lucas  
Dazzles  
OutWrite!**

THE NATIONAL QUEER PROGRESSIVE QUARTERLY

Non Profit Bipad: 65498

1998 VOLUME 23 NO. 4 \$4.95

## **MILLENNIUM MARCH CONTROVERSIES!**

### **FEATURING:**

**Barbara Smith**

**Kerry Lobel**

**Dennis Poplin**

**Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz**

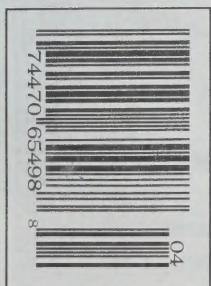
**Geeta Patel**

**David Serlin**

**Leslie Cagan**



# **EMBRACE THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO...**





**The national queer progressive quarterly**

**Editor**

Marla Erlien

**Copy Editors**

Margaret Cerullo, Cynthia Peters, Lorelei Costa

**Ad Co-ordinators**

Cynthia Peters

**Intern**

Lorelei Costa

**Design & Production**

Jim Augusto

**BSEF Director**

Ann Holder

**The Board of Directors**

**Bromfield Street Educational Foundation**

Michael Bronski, Art Cohen,  
Surina Khan, De Larson, Teresa Lau,  
Michael Lowenthal, Sandy Martin,  
J.W. Maxie Jr., Urvashi Vaid

**Thank you  
to the following volunteers:**

Melissa Barton: office assistance and bookkeeping,  
Donna Kiefer: office assistance and Prisoner Project,  
Bill Magner, Jason Moore, Richard Voos,  
Jim Fauntleroy: Off-the-Page, Carrie Dearborn,  
Julie Netherland: Prisoner Project,  
Jamie Simpson: office assistance

GCN

29 Stanhope Street

Boston, MA 02116

Telephone: (617) 262-6969

©January 1998

Bromfield Street Educational Foundation

ISSN: 0147-0728

Advertisements do not reflect  
editorial endorsement.

GCN is available on microfilm from  
UMI, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.  
GCN is distributed by Ubiquity Distributors,  
607 DeGraw Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

Gay Community News is supported in part by generous  
grants from: The Astrea Foundation, The Haymarket  
People's Fund, The Out Fund of the Funding Exchange,  
The Fund for Four Directions, The Paul Rapoport  
Foundation, Astraea Foundation, and Resist. The  
Bromfield Street Educational Foundation gratefully  
acknowledges their support.

## contents

**Introduction: Millennium Controversies 3**

**Making a Fresh Start— 4**

**The Challenge For Queer Writers**

Craig Lucas

**SECTION: MILLENNIUM MARCH  
CONTROVERSIES**

**Editorial: The Gospel According to . . . 15**

**Documents: Press Releases 19**  
**and Public Letters**

**Commentaries**

**The Fight is for Social, 40**

**Political and Economic Justice**

Barbara Smith

**Proposal from the Ad Hoc Committee 42**

**Millennium Panic! 44**

Dennis Poplin

**OutSpoken Concerns 48**

Leslie Cagan

**What's Wrong with Millennialist Thinking? 50**

David Serlin

**Stories for the Millennium: Disrupting Time 52**

Geeta Patel

**A March, A Movement, A Moment 54**

Kerry Lobel

**Whose Millennium? 58**

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz

**PRISONER PROJECT**

**PenPals 60**

# INTRODUCTION

## "Millennium March"

### Controversies

The "call" by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) on February 4 for a "Millennium March on Washington for Equality" has generated growing debates over the value and purpose of such an event. For the record, it is not a call for a march, but for a rally defined by a seven-member Board of Directors of a newly incorporated organization, with an auxiliary leadership committee. This committee will include other groups who will "advise" the Board. Is this a parody of the corporate world or emblematic of a takeover?

In the "Millennium March" section, we include a series of documents focused on the rally-2000 that have come to *GCN* and commentaries that we solicited in order to extend the list of concerns not included in the documents. We created this section because we think that the "call" and its effects reveal most clearly the current power structure of the "gay movement" and signals the need for a kind of resurgent grassroots to re-vision a movement for social, economic and political change.

As the documents reveal, one sector of the movement was developing a plan for 50 state actions to take place in March of 1999. NGLTF and the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Organizations were assessing whether the underfunded 36 state organizations could accrue the resources needed to generate

actions. HRC/UFMCC having the greatest resources, decided on their own to accept a proposal from Robin Tyler for a spring national Millennium March in DC.

Though most national organizations, with the exceptions of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Project and BiNet, initially endorsed the "call," within two weeks, all but the Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO) had withdrawn. Yet between mid-February and mid-April, the "March" proposal went from a nationally contested call, to a love fest among organizations who claim profoundly different, even opposing, political positions. On April 30, with the simultaneous press releases from the sponsors of the Millennium rally and the 50 state actions, the appearance of solidarity was presented to the public. These releases reflect a compromise negotiated at a meeting of executive directors from national organizations—a kind of behind closed doors maneuver, instead of a probing public debate as befits a movement. Or, in the worst imaginable scenario, deals were cut behind closed doors as befits an internal (corporate) power structure.

This movement mimics the greater society. The unequal distribution of resources among LGBT organizations heightens the sense of vulnerability among the less well endowed. The result of the corporatization of "gay" politics is apparent in the shift of power to the most

wealthy and privileged sectors. In earlier years, this material vulnerability might have been offset by the presence of a vibrant movement. The muted voices among the national leadership remind us of the absence of a mobilized constituency for queer liberation within the rubric of economic and social justice.

In this issue of *GCN* we explore the deeper issues revealed by the controversy: the questions of democracy, the dominance of corporate structures, the role of evangelical Christianity, and the political frameworks that now circulate in press releases and polls: "faith and the family" and of course the broad notion of equality (here meaning "sameness").

We believe that much more is at stake than a debate over state marches in 1999, or a national picnic in 2000. Building a movement involves a strategy that airs our differences, our divergent goals and hopes for the future; a strategy that engages the broad base of queers, as well as the many communities that people live in, identify with, and stake their futures with. There is no queer community without bilingualism, without confronting race, gender and class hierarchies.

A national "call" requires that overburdened activists, and activist organizations, will end up doing all the work and shouldering all the tedium of logistics, further taxing their already overextended resources. The credit, power and money will continue to travel in the direction it is already going. There may be some grassroots disbursements, but it will be at the discretion of those who hold the purse strings; those who are engaged in accruing the power to determine the direction of our movement and our movement's goals. The time to talk back is now, or we may all wake up on May 1, 2000, as outcasts, or as part of a planned "community" we no longer recognize.

## Craig Lucas

Making A

# Fresh Start

The Challenge for

**Queer Writers**

On February 20, 1998, Craig Lucas was one of two key note addresses that opened the 1998 Outwrite Conference in Boston. To an audience of over 1000 people, Lucas dazzled the audience with his talk that we are pleased to publish here. The 1999 Outwrite Conference will be held in Boston at the Park Plaza the weekend of February 26-28. Pratibha Parmar, who was unable to keynote this year due to her mother's illness, has agreed to keynote the 1999 conference. —ed.

One of the joys of being a writer is being able to say the truth... unless of course you work for a newspaper, magazine, TV station, university, govern-

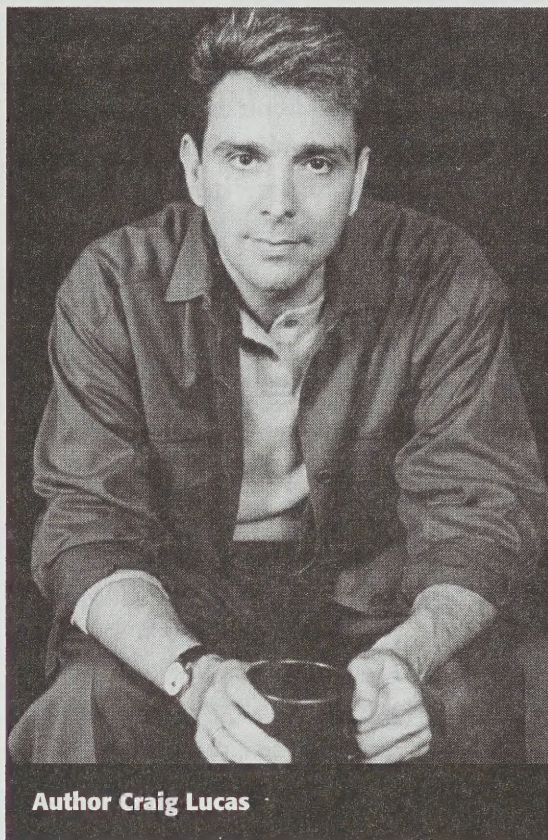
ment agency, religious organization, movie studio, or corporation which could terminate your livelihood for telling certain truths. Even if you are a free-lance writer—a poet, say, or a playwright or historian doing independent research—you might have this perverse need to put food on the table. We pride ourselves on our first amendment rights—some of us—but if you're a writer in someone's employ, you are not necessarily free to say what you want, or you may get a chance to say it once only to find yourself saying it alone, over and over, to your reflection in the bathroom mirror. If no one is paying you, you might feel easier about saying the truth, but very possibly no one will be listening either.

It comes as no surprise to many of you that the ongoing struggles to write well, to survive in a “free-market” economy, and to keep growing as a healthy queer individual—raise questions which consume whole lifetimes; they intersect with each other in ways which can’t always be understood, especially as they are happening. So it helps to look back on the specifics of experience with as much honesty as possible, and with an eye on the future—a perspective art certainly offers; history can provide a similar double vision.

### Story Telling

By “writing well,” I don’t mean simply the artfulness or eloquence we employ, but also this degree of truthfulness—with ourselves and others; one can write very well as one lies through one’s teeth. For instance, one can accept a book review assignment at the Times, and completely trash a book in which one is personally attacked, and never mention that fact in the review. One can tell stories in which homophobia is no more than the aberrant quirk of a few mean, isolated individuals rather than the systematic attempt by large, generously-funded organizations to continue denying us our civil rights and oppress us economically. One can be the gay editor of a national magazine and oversee articles which put forth the idea that queers are, yes, discriminated against but not literally “oppressed.” If this were the case, lesbians and gay men would be earning the same as their straight counterparts, and this is not true.

I grew up in conservative, white, suburban Philadelphia, an only child adopted by deeply-conservative, middle-class parents; my father was an FBI agent during the McCarthy witch-hunts; my mother’s family was Jewish, though she and her mother had converted to Christianity, and this fact was kept hidden from as many people as possible, including me. Dim little me at the age of, what?, ten?, at last wonders aloud, How come so many of Mom’s relatives are Jewish? Part of my torpor in coming to this realization may have been that both my parents made anti-Semitic remarks; they referred to blacks as niggers, homosexuals (if mentioned at all, and only then in whispers of shock and disgust) were fairies, Nixon was a god, Communists were always the enemy.



Author Craig Lucas

My school-teachers were almost all cut from similar cloth. If it were actually possible to “recruit” children into one’s own sexual orientation and belief system, I would now be heterosexual, Republican, and god-fearing. I’m not.

### Me and Mom

Early homosexual fantasies placed me, I felt, in great peril. Both of my parents were alcoholics, my father’s cold disdain for my expressiveness, my early cross-dressing, was palpable; my mother made no secret of her sexual attraction to me, and on numerous occasions would crawl into bed with me once I was a teenager, plant her lips on mine and coo and moan.

She taught me there were no boundaries between us, that when she was cold, I was to put on a sweater; she told me I was perfect and magical and uniquely gifted, that I would never have to work to achieve anything, it should and would come easily, that childhood was a happy cloudless time, that being “normal” and fitting in and being liked by others was essential to one’s survival

# Craig Lucas

unless, of course, one was a member of Philadelphia's ultra WASP, Main Line aristocracy, typified by the character Gloria Upson, in her favorite movie, *Auntie Mame*. In truth, my mother was terrified of life, a victim of her father's alcoholism and sexual predation, and she has left me these many tangled legacies, including the following:

I'm nine years old; my mom hands me *To Kill A Mockingbird* and says, I hear this is good; there are kids in it. Since she hadn't read it, she didn't know that there was also rape and racism and more than a hint of queerness in the characterizations of Dill and Scout. A door opened in a wall made entirely of granite, and I was saved, at least for the hours of my reading, from the intractable, impossible confusion of my position in the universe.

Here were people struggling with pain: here were children whose childhoods were not happy cloudless times, and adults who fought however clumsily and unsuccessfully against the narrow-minded, Bible-justifying hatred of people who used words like "nigger" and "kike." The contradictions into which my own nature had thrown me—as a budding homo, and a secret jew, if only by adoption, and god forbid my father should find this one out, but also a developing atheist and maybe even a communist to boot—these contradictions were at least acknowledged within the pages of Harper Lee's novel.

I've not gone back to re-read the book, and have no idea how good it is, or where it would fall in anyone else's idea of a "canon," but let me say this: it served a purpose for a living 9-year-old person who was terribly lost, and was part of a web of other books and plays, stories overheard, imagined, made concrete through words, which enabled me to survive, if barely, the torment of a lonely and in many ways destructive beginning.

For I also knew I'd been abandoned the day I was born; I knew I was unwanted by my birth mother; and these two people who did want me also wanted me to be things I couldn't be.

## My First Creations

The first stirrings of wanting to create something, make art, seem concurrent with my earliest sexual imag-

inings. What is it about putting crayon to paper, donning a costume and improvising a play, a dance, acting out with puppets or dolls? Listen to kids jabbering to one another, they are all little novelists and screenwriters, retelling and refashioning everything into art. I can remember with the intense pain of a new and unrequited love this overwhelming drive to make something, but what?, how?

**As one develops a keener appreciation for subtler works of expression, a higher sensitivity to the complexity in great works, one also hears the voices struggling: between the inside and the out, between the society and the individual, oppressor and oppressed.**

I wanted to write musicals, paint paintings, I wanted to fly like Mary Martin as Peter Pan before the eyes of the world and sing about ... about ... what? What could I tell them that was safe to say and yet worth crowing about?

I wrote puppet plays about witches and kings and severely endangered children, and performed them for money at children's birthday parties and on local TV—my first taste of capitalism!—very much encouraged by my parents, I hand this to them —

Thank you, Mom, Dad.

—earning me enough to keep myself in show albums and a subscription to *The New Yorker* where I encountered for the first time stories by Cheever, Salinger, the poems of Anne Sexton. Sophistication! Adultery! Miserable suburbanites with their martinis and swimming pools, their existential angst, their Zen Buddhism. I was in pig heaven.

## Art as Testimony to a Presence

Funds for the NEA have now been stripped to the bone on the assumption that art is less essential to our

lives than space stations and weaponry, or our vast mechanisms for spying and interfering in the internal affairs of other nations; art we can do without, or certainly the dictates of commerce will pick up the slack: "You can get it for free on TV anyway."

But who wants to give their hard-earned tax dollars to sacrilege and perversity? All Americans like the same kind of art, basically, and if they don't, they can go out and buy whatever they like; if they don't have money, that's too bad. I'm the majority. That's what 'majority rules' means, isn't it?"

Every repressive regime in history has attempted to silence artists, often with great success, frequently labeling the offending work "decadent." "Decadent" means someone is questioning something about me and I don't like it.

If art is just another luxury like air conditioning and whitewall tires, then why did the earliest human beings take time out from what had to be very busy schedules to paint horses and bison on the walls of their caves?

I refuse to believe that between foraging, hunting, building fires, making clothes, procreating, raising and feeding kids, fighting the elements, moving from cave to cave and watching out for snakes, they had so much extra time they just decided to try their hand at pastels. Whatever those paintings are doing on those walls forty, eighty thousand years after their creation, they are not merely the expression of someone's leisure hour—the Rose Bowl parade of prehistory. They say, "I was here;" they say, "This creature moved before my eyes, lived, and was killed and eaten, kept me and my family alive as it also perhaps threatened our existence."

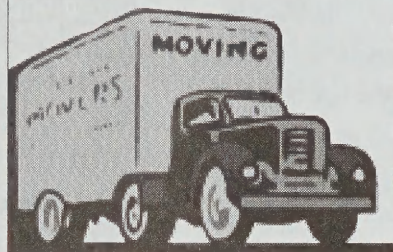
And whatever is in us that is human, here it is, living longer than I know I can, but continuing and testifying to my presence, in this moment, in this place."

All the people fuming in Maine and elsewhere about what is "holy" and "sacred" with their shrill voices cannot silence the silent, pure and singing voices of those anonymous artists attesting to their own most certain truths still.

#### Art as Teacher, Parent

Books and plays were my teachers, my best parents,

## Movers on the go!



**Best price in town.**

**Won't be beat.**

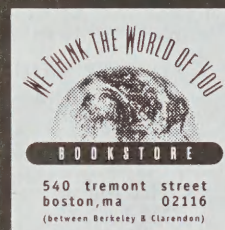
**24 hours, 7 days a week.**

**Call 617-381-0503.**

**\$5 off with this ad.**

## IN THE HEART OF BOSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY

BOOKS  
MAGAZINES  
CARDS  
NEWS  
STAMPS  
T-SHIRTS  
GIFTS



FREE  
LOCAL  
PAPERS  
AND  
MAPS

**[ 423.1965 ]**

*A short walk from Copley Square and BackBay/South End Station*

PORTLAND'S  
BEST SOURCE FOR  
GAY + LESBIAN  
LITERATURE

## DROP ME A LINE...

**PROGRESSIVE CARDS, GIFTS + WRAP**

**611 CONGRESS ST., PORTLAND 773-5547**

100 Acres • Pool  
Hot Tub • Trails

20 Charming Rooms  
Peace & Privacy

*The*  
**Highlands Inn**  
P.O. Box 118  
Bethlehem, NH 03574  
(603) 869-3978  
**A LESBIAN PARADISE**

# Craig Lucas

doing the job nobody else wanted. When I found a hardback copy of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* at a local library—I couldn't have been more than twelve—here were adults drinking and hurting one another in the name of love, something I had certainly seen, but never heard discussed: it wasn't on TV. Plays by Thornton Wilder, Williams, and soon the novels of Isherwood, Vidal, helped to pave the way out of that here and now, and on to some other then and there—this one right here and now. That road also included the novels of, yes, Gordon Merrick and John Rechy and the poems of Ed Field, all of which I squirreled home in my bookbag from dime-store racks, library shelves, promising a potentially-liberating, but also scary and furtive existence; my first attempted suicide was only a month after the movie of *The Boys In The Band* played our local movie theater. I'd loved it, seen it three or four times. The subterranean message, hidden (at least from me at the time) beneath this frantic joy up on the screen was "There is no way out of this self-hatred, this hopeless alcoholism and abuse, even if you find others like yourself, you will all destroy one another with hollow laughter and joyless sex."

## Poetry

I took an overdose of barbiturates with a generous swill of alcohol, was hospitalized, and saw my

**Of all the dangers  
now to art, to the  
writing and teach-  
ing of history, and  
to ourselves as  
individuals, I think  
the most pernicious  
is the marketplace.**

first psychiatrist; it was almost too easy to convince him, in one session no less, that it was all a misunderstanding; he didn't want to discuss my sexuality any more than I did. And off he sent me to college where within a day or two I learned that Anne Sexton was on the faculty. I wrote my first poem (I think I just wanted to meet someone famous, frankly) and I submitted it and was accepted into her writing workshop where I produced coded, hopelessly clotted poems which she gingerly suggested might contain homosexual themes; I was outraged, how dare she?

Thank you, Anne, for giving me the first go-ahead. Thank you, too, for the vast world of poems you broke open and spilled at my feet—Roethke, Plath, Rich, Williams, Merwin, Bishop, Merrill. To this day most of my friends, for reasons which remain mysterious to me, do not read poetry.

Here's a sonnet by Marilyn Hacker (it rhymes):

*"First, I want to make you  
come in my hand while I watch  
you and kiss you, and if you  
cry, I'll drink your tears while,  
with my whole hand, I hold  
your drenched loveliness con-  
tracting. And after a breath, I  
want to make you full  
again, and wet. I want to  
make you come  
in my mouth like a storm. No  
tears now. The sum of your  
parts is my whole most beauti-  
ful chart of the constella-  
tions—your left breast in my  
mouth again. You know you'll  
have to be your age. As I lie  
beside you, cover me  
like a gold cloud, hands every-  
where, at last inside me where  
I trust you, then your tongue  
where I need you. I want you  
to make me come."*

Now what is it you don't like about poetry?

## Plays

Plays, however, were my primary oxygen then, and still are. I prefer them to movies and TV; plays and their authors can afford to be iconoclastic; plays are cheaper to produce; 25 people sitting in a room on folding chairs, you've got a show. Queer characters marched up and down the Broadway, Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway stages long before movies and TV even figured out we existed. Oscar Wilde, Genet, Brecht, Shaw, Ionesco, Beckett—and suddenly in my undergraduate years there were John Guare, Jack Gelber, Rochelle

Owens, Michael Smith, Lanford Wilson, Terrence McNally, Rosalyn Drexler, Jean Claude van Italie, Caryl Churchill—these people tore into bourgeois conventions with a vengeance. And a lot of them, well, they seemed to be queer.

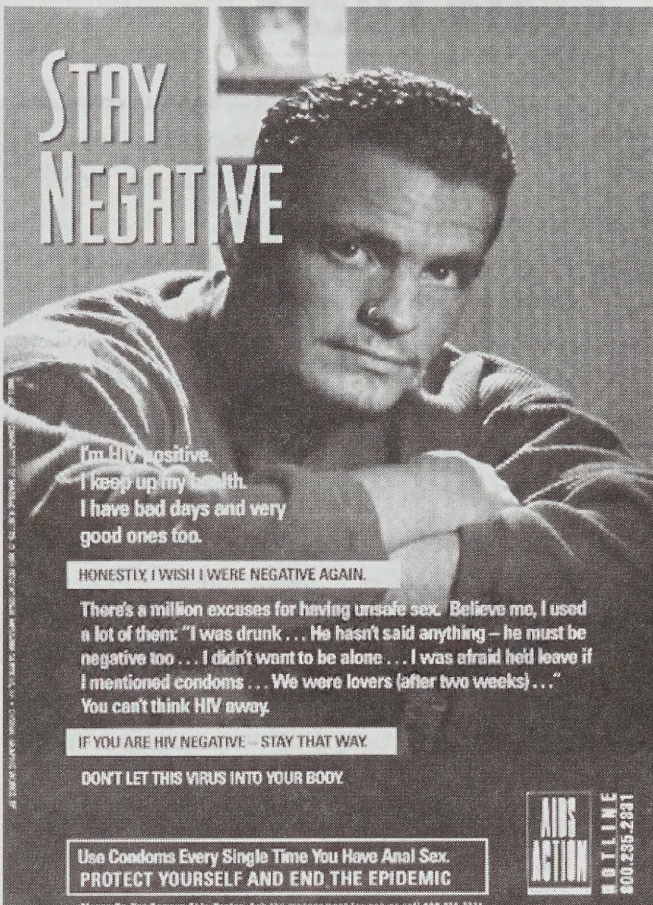
I showed almost no one the coded, fantastical one-acts I was writing then in case they might glimpse me peeking out between the shower of words and borrowed mannerisms from Gertrude Stein.

I also joined the Worker's League, a tiny Trotskyist party, where I was informed that homosexuality was the last vestige of bourgeois capitalism, a decadent phase which would wither away along with the church once the working class assumed power. Queer men were simply refusing to grow up; lesbians were not discussed, ever. This all fit nicely into my parents' scheme. Both the right and left seemed to agree: homo was bad, so I didn't have to come out, shouldn't, in fact, but I could still sneak around and suck a few cocks, and try getting fucked, ouch, no thanks; and I couldn't for the life of me figure out why I was having such a hard time writing, my plays all stalled, I abandoned them midway, just as I had been abandoned, maybe I just didn't have any talent.

## Round Two: Sexuality Woes

After college I moved to New York with my girlfriend whose parents were conveniently both Stalinists, and they agreed: homosexuality was a sickness, a refusal to be a responsible adult. People seem to forget that sexual liberation politics did not spring full-born from the brilliance of the left—I'm glad *The Nation* and *The New York Times* have belatedly come around, sort of—but liberation politics came, at least in my experience, from feminism: Boston's Bread and Roses were the first folks I heard speak of gay liberation, and they saw it as being linked to the struggles of women.

Filled with dread, because I probably didn't want my struggles linked to those of women, god no, I tried writing a novel about Icarus and Daedalus—no one could spot me as a fag in some souped-up myth about a flying boy and his dad, trapped together in a tower, could they?, but again my words knotted up and choked me. And my girlfriend dumped me — Thank you, Robin.



# STAY NEGATIVE

I'm HIV positive.  
I keep up my health.  
I have bad days and very  
good ones too.

HONESTLY, I WISH I WERE NEGATIVE AGAIN.

There's a million excuses for having unsafe sex. Believe me, I used a lot of them: "I was drunk ... He hasn't said anything — he must be negative too ... I didn't want to be alone ... I was afraid he'd leave if I mentioned condoms ... We were lovers (after two weeks) ..."  
You can't think HIV away.

IF YOU ARE HIV NEGATIVE — STAY THAT WAY.

DON'T LET THIS VIRUS INTO YOUR BODY.

Use Condoms Every Single Time You Have Anal Sex.  
PROTECT YOURSELF AND END THE EPIDEMIC

Please Do Not Remove This Poster. Ask the management for one or call 800-235-2331.

**AIDS  
ACTION**  
HOTLINE  
800.235.2331

## STUDY SPANISH

in a gay friendly environment at  
**CETLALIC in CUERNAVACA, MEXICO**

In addition to ongoing Spanish language classes, Cetlalic,  
an alternative language center,

### ANNOUNCES:

#### Intensive Language/Political Study Programs

*Spanish language instruction, guest speakers, roundtable  
discussions, field trips, encounters with community groups/schools.*

**I. "Coming Out: The Gay Men's Experience in Mexico"**  
June 7-26, 1998

**II. Exploring Commonalities, Bridging Differences  
Language & Culture for Chican@s**  
June 14 - July 3, 1998

**III. IN/VISIBILITY: Lesbian Lives in Mexico**  
June 27-July 17, 1998

**IV. Language and Culture for Bilingual Educators**  
June 28 - July 17, 1998

In US, contact Margaret Cerullo at 617 497-5999 or  
Cetlalic, Tel/Fax: (52-73)13-26-37; email: [cetlalic@mail.giga.com](mailto:cetlalic@mail.giga.com)  
World Wide Web: <http://www.giga.com/~cetlalic>

# Craig Lucas

And miraculously, really, because I'd never studied singing, I got hired to sing in the chorus of an out-of-town musical that came to B'way and ran for years. And years.

So, all right, coming out as a gay man backstage in the chorus of a B'way musical is not perhaps an act of unparalleled heroism. But I did it; and came out to my parents, told them how happy I was (they were not) and how it wasn't their fault and wasn't something that required blame anyway, I would thrive, I wouldn't grow old and be alone and miserable, an outcast, and I returned to New York and tried to kill myself with so many barbiturates washed back with vodka I was in a coma for four and a half days.

Despite *Ellen*, despite *Angels In America*, despite *In And Out*, gay teens are still four times more likely to commit suicide than straights. Why is this? Is it because we now have so many "special rights" or because of our "gay-friendly" president, or is it our new visibility, this much-touted and wide-spread tolerance and acceptance that straight people keep pointing to, or is it perhaps because the alleged blowjobs in the Oval Office somehow make us feel more comfortable about our own?

The psychologist I had to see before they would agree to release me from the hospital said that I was in big trouble. She said that being homosexual was not an illness, didn't need to be changed, but that I was suffering from another disease altogether. She didn't use this word, but what she described was homophobia. The world's, and my own. I would have to work very hard, and dig—go places I was terrified to go. She said that I had in fact been abused, and that my anger needed to be turned outward toward real, appropriate enemies.

Thank you, Connie Weinstock.

Without the subsidy of three long-running Broadway musicals, I would never have been able to afford the therapy, and I often wonder how it is more people don't perish for the lack of appropriate healing.

## Rising from the Ashes

It should be no wonder now to any of you that I began suddenly to be able to finish my plays—not without struggle, not without real agony, in fact—but for the

first time I had a theme, a self to express, utilize, fight against, a me from which to imagine. I had moorings.

I want everyone now to imagine themselves as they were as little children—at eight, six, ten, I don't care how old you want to picture yourself—but I want you to place your self up here beside me, envisioning yourself as you were at that age, in the clothes you were dressed in, as you see yourself in those photos you still have, and I want you to say out loud to your child's self (you can tell I've had a lot of therapy, right?): "Craig," your own name goes first, "Kate, Urvashi, Michael, Patrick, Sarah," you're to say, "It is all right to ... " and here you are to insert the name of a sexual act which you like to do and which you were not encouraged to engage in during your adolescence. "Craig," go on, do it, say it, "Craig—it is all right to suck cock ... it is all right to lick pussy ... It is all right ... to put that inside there where you know you want it ... It is all alright."

Good.

I've been accused by at least one queer theorist of being a "closeted gay writer" for creating straight characters in some of my plays, thus trying to appease and pander to straight audiences. I want to say for once and for all that imagination is the stuff of art. I take for myself the right to write whatever I want—white, black, male, female, straight, lesbian, young, old. I don't care what anybody says: People your art with anyone and everyone you choose. The old adage about writing what you know, if taken too literally, is little more than the death of art itself. To every critic who tells you what you should be writing, remember; it's very valuable to be able to say: Fuck you, go and write your own play, you bitter fucking Has-Been, you're not even a Has-Been, you're a Never-Was, a frustrated loser, and nobody listens to you anyway.

I don't know, but I find this helpful.

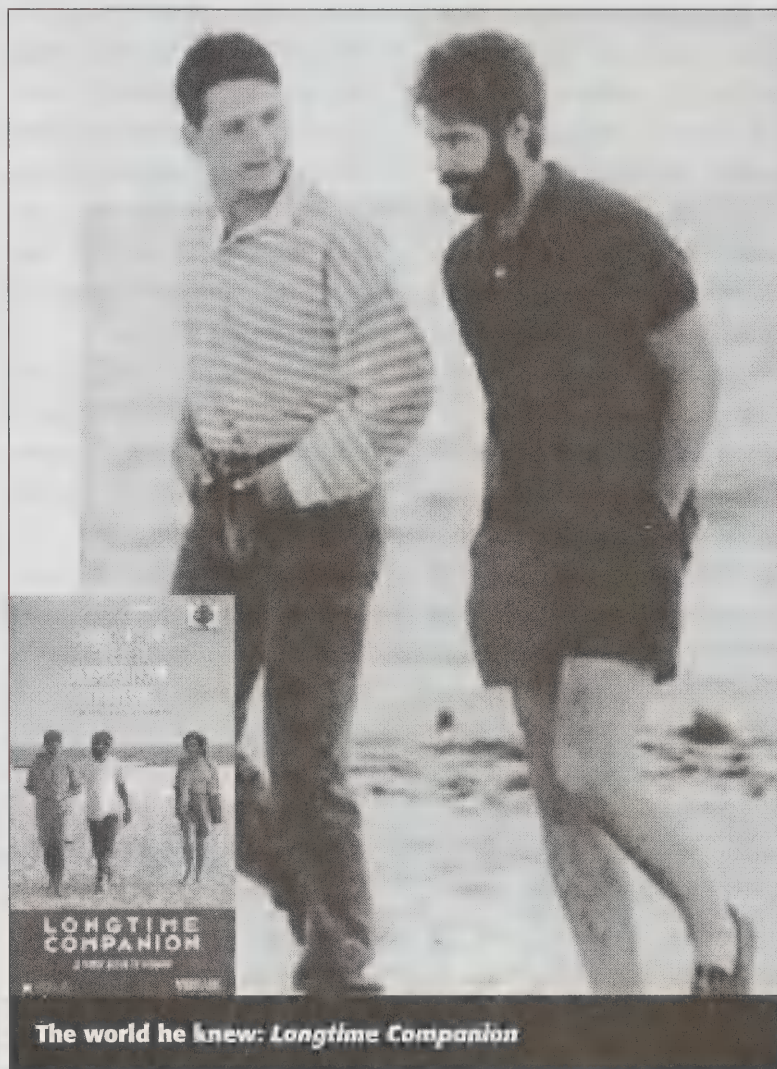
## A Map for Living

Norman Rene, the man who read my first play and produced and directed it, is dead: two years ago, from AIDS. He directed all my plays and screenplays until he was too sick to work, and I learned from him a great deal about the craft of playwriting which is not merely

narrative skills, but most essentially the careful study of people, how they behave under many circumstances, and how their stories are best told through behavior, an honest examination of actions, and motives, one's own and the characters'. He maintained that people go to movies or plays, read books, watch TV to learn how to live their lives better. That art was, among other things, a map for living. It could be another century, another world; the characters could do all the wrong things, but still we would be sorting through the tale for signposts, for understanding, for connections, growth.

Thank you, Norman.

The people who say that good art is not political, and never politically useful, that it changes nothing, and that its value lies only in its aesthetic perfection—may themselves be great voices; I've heard this idea put forth by, among others, Auden, Nabokov, Elizabeth Bishop, Salman Rushdie, and I don't devalue the art any of them have made. But they are wrong. Their thinking is too narrow. Art helps. As one develops a keener appreciation for subtler works of expression, a higher sensitivity to the complexity in great works, one also hears the voices struggling: between the inside and the out, between the society and the individual, oppressor and oppressed. It's all a question of perspective, and from where I stand *King Lear* and *Medea* and *Death Of A Salesman*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*,



*Angels In America*, *Rat Bohemia*, *Almost History*, *My Alexandria*, *Giovanni's Room*, *O Pioneers!*, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, and on and on are all capable of saving lives. You say they can't? I say, Prove it.

### Hey, Free Markets are not Free

Of all the dangers now to art, to the writing and teaching of history, and to ourselves as individuals, I think the most pernicious is the marketplace. And I know most of us don't have the luxury of saying no to work. That, obviously, is how they get us. I do know I've done my best work when nobody was paying me, or when the money came without strings attached, in the form of a grant or a commission from a not-for-profit theater or from public broadcasting. And that's another difference between theater and movies: playwrights, like novelists, own the copyright to their work; write a movie or a TV script, and your words are no longer your own; they literally own it. In perpetuity throughout the universe.

# Craig Lucas

It may seem a simple observation, but people who are not working for profit are more apt to tell the truth about profit-based systems. Seen from the other side, this means that All The News That's Fit To Print is the news that doesn't threaten the commercial interests of the people doing the printing. Astounding the number of people one meets in one's quotidian pursuits who still think the newspapers are doing us all a public service.

No movie studio would make *Longtime Companion*; it was paid for by Public Broadcasting with money from, among others, the NEA. We were answerable to no one but ourselves. I wrote about a world I knew: upper middle-class white gay men in New York. Everything in that script reflects something I have seen in the world. Still it gives me pause to realize the vision we depicted may have been used to further the lie that gay men live in privilege, and are across the board more well off than straights.

Political correctness may threaten artists from one side, but this pales next to the blind vitriol and venomous uses of reactionary political agendas from the other, and that is another kind of political correctness, one the pundits never mention.

The movies I have written for studios have all been compromises. Most of them don't get made, and whenever I squeeze in a little bit of myself, that's the part they hate the

most. I just wrote a movie for Warner Brothers about a straight guy who for complicated reasons pretends to be gay. You can imagine the set of notes I received from the studio. They love it, of course, everything about it, except for one thing: they want me to change the guy pretending to be gay.

I wrote another movie, this one for Paramount; in it a father rejects his son for being queer. The queer producer—a notoriously rude and staggeringly insulting figure, so I don't take it personally—has never called me in the three years since I turned in the script. I guess they're not going to make it.

So I'm going to go on writing for the theater, as much as I can, on my own time, the same way I wrote at night and on weekends when I was a secretary in a publishing firm after my chorus work dried up. The wonderful surgeon I fell in love with and lived with and loved for eleven years has died of AIDS; I no longer have a lover who is also my benefactor —Thank you, Dr. Tim. — And Public Broadcasting is no longer making movies under the aegis of American Playhouse — Thank you, Lindsay Law, for all you did — And so I am going to have to subsidize the work I want to do, and that is more than all right. There are many, many worse things than working two jobs. Or three. Or four.

What sustains me in all this, however, is my belief that there is something better than what the government and corporations are

pitching. I don't believe that we will always live under “free-market” capitalism; democracy demands increasing rights for all, it is progressive, it doesn't stay the same. Once only white land owners could vote, and slowly others have been admitted into the process. The Bible was used to justify slavery; it was used to justify the persecution of Jews; and right now we happen to be the lucky winners of the scapegoat sweepstakes. (If the US markets collapse, I say, Watch out! Many Jews in Germany thought they were assimilated, and accepted, too: “Can't happen here.”)

Until we have an economic and social system which feeds all the people, affords them all access to health care, and education, and art, and does not require or permit these vast discrepancies between rich and poor, I simply have to assume, and insist, that we can do better; and my personal struggle to write well, survive in this climate, and still be true to my queer soul is only part of a larger struggle:

As if we've seen in Maine, if the only question on the ballot is gay rights, we can most emphatically lose. If we can put our issues on the ballot when other people are also feeling threatened, when other issues are at stake, and stand side by side with our various concerns, I believe that ultimately we can't lose.

I'm going to close with three quotes.

Gore Vidal: “To be truly commercial is do well that which

should not be done at all."

Oscar Wilde: "It is the public, not the play, that I desire to make a success."

This last is Bertolt Brecht, a poem, "The Doubter".

*"Whenever we seemed*

*To have found the answer to a question*

*One of us untied the string of the old  
rolled-up Chinese scroll on the wall, so  
that it fell down and Revealed to us the  
man on the bench who*

*Doubted so much.*

*I, he said to us,*

*Am the doubter. I am doubtful whether*

*The work was well done that devoured  
your days. Whether what you said would  
still have value for anyone if  
it were less well said.*

*Whether you said it well but perhaps*

*Were not convinced of the truth of what  
you said. Whether it is not ambiguous;  
each possible misunderstanding Is your  
responsibility. Or it can be unambiguous  
and take the contradictions out of things;  
is it too*

*unambiguous?*

*If so, what you say is useless. Your thing  
has no life in it. Are you truly in the  
stream of happening? Do you accept All  
that develops? Are you developing? Who  
are you? To whom Do you speak? Who  
finds what you say useful? And by the way:  
Is it sobering? Can it be read in the morn-  
ing? Is it also linked to what is already  
there? Are the sentences*

*that were*

*Spoken before you made use of, or at least  
refuted? Is*

*everything verifiable?*

*By experience? By which one? But above  
all Always above all else: how does one act  
If one believes what you say? Above all:  
how does one act?*

# We're Open To Alternatives.



It takes a world-class medical facility to have a worldly perspective on alternative treatments like acupuncture and holistic care. In fact, we offer a full complement of programs ranging from the routine to the innovative. From physical exams to HIV care, from preventive health care to management of chronic illness, from breast exams, Pap smears and GYN care to mental health and addiction services.

Plus we have an ongoing affiliation with both

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School.

Between our own leading-edge medical and research expertise and theirs, we believe we've created one of the finest health centers you'll find anywhere.

We accept most major health plans.

Discounted patient parking is available under the building.

And, of course, we're wheelchair accessible.

Call 617-267-0900 ext. 222 for an appointment or more information.

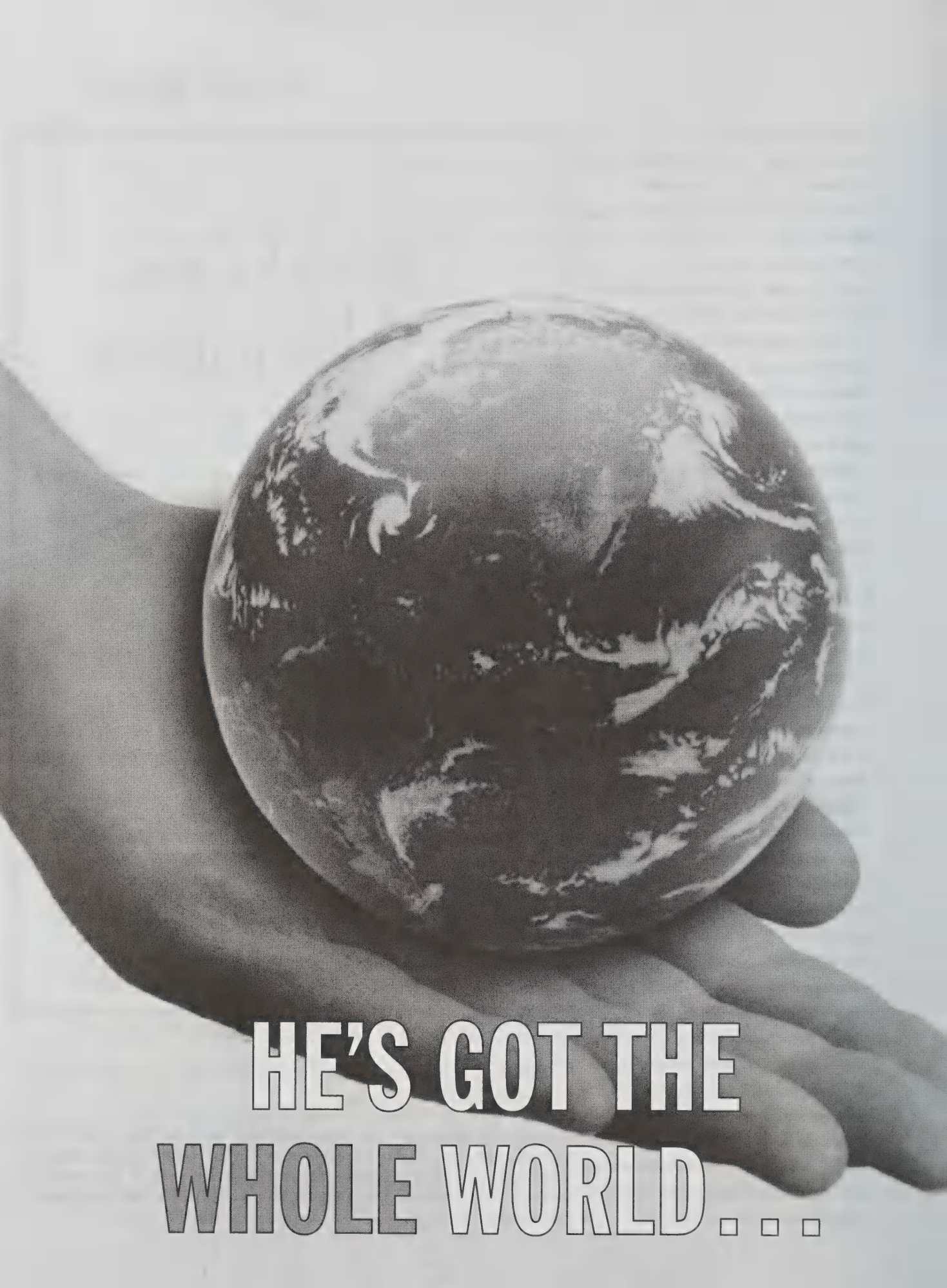


Se habla español. Para más información, llame al 617-267-0900, extensión 447.

Fenway Community Health Center · 7 Haviland Street, Boston, MA 02115

*Reflectively, curiously, we studied the doubting Blue man on the scroll, looked at each other and Made a fresh start."*

**Craig Lucas is the writer of many plays, including *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Reckless*, *Blue Window*, and *God's Heart: The Dying Gaul*. His screenplays include *Longtime Companion* and *Troubled Steps*. His essays have appeared in *The Advocate*, *American Theater*, and more. A recipient of numerous awards, he has been a Pulitzer Prize finalist.**



**HE'S GOT THE  
WHOLE WORLD...**

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO . . .

The approach of the year 2000 has generated marketing opportunities few will avoid. On the internet there is a site describing the hundreds, by now thousands, of applications for trademarks using the word "millennium." Certainly gays can't bypass marketing opportunities, even if it is only to create gay visibility in the millennial marketplace. But millennium is an overwrought word. Much lore surrounds these measurements of time, dating back thousands of years before the calendars of some were reinvented based on the founding of Christianity. (As Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz points out, it will be the year 5760 for Jews when Christians mark the year 2000.)

Now we have a "Millennium March on Washington for Equality." Hmm... A marketing ploy? Probably. Rumors have circulated that applications for "millennium march" trademarks have been sent in. But more is at stake here than "Buy American." This is the production of a millennium event led by an evangelical church—the Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). A mobilized evangelicalism around the millennium is full of biblical meanings, evoking fears, panics, glory, anxieties over the "second" coming. The "March" then is, in a very pro-

nounced way, marking time through Christianity, and as Geeta Patel ("Millennium Stories") writes in this issue, through colonial time as well.

## MCC's Mission

So why this marking of time through Christianity and colonialism? Are we now in a moment when we battle the Religious Right's strategy to abolish the separation of church and state, and yet, ironically, find ourselves enlisted by gay mega-events that likewise call into question that separation. Are we not seeking a secular society? Listen to the words of Troy

Perry, the founder of the UFMCC, who justified his leadership of the millennium rally to his General Council by arguing that they "will have the opportunity to reach tens of thousands of persons who have not yet been touched by our local church ministries." To be touched of course includes providing the opportunity for others to "hear and embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our participation." That is an opportunity that UFMCC hopes to bring to the entire world. They have missions in about 15 countries, with eyes on expansion.

## Faith and Family

In their March 5 letter (see document), Elizabeth Birch and Troy Perry describe the 1990s as a time when our priorities have shifted:

*We are in the middle of a gay baby boom. The desire to legally marry has emerged as an extremely important goal for many gay Americans. Many of us are returning to the churches of our youth or finding new ways to express our spirituality. ...*

*The shift we have described has NEVER been effectively communicated on a mass scale to the American people. A Millennium March provides a remarkable opportunity to dramatically demonstrate what it means to be gay in this nation at the turn of the century. This*



Finding new ways to express spirituality?

*march is an unprecedented opportunity to celebrate our diversity as a community of family, spirituality and equality.*

Is this the shift we want to describe “on a mass scale to the American people?” What kinds of representations are operating here? Birch and Perry describe us as “returning to churches” and claim to “celebrate our diversity.” The (perhaps unconscious) referencing of “churches” tells us something about what is meant here by “diversity.”

### Family

If we drop gay as an adjective, we can conjure another era. Think the 1950s: there is a baby boom, McCarthyism is in full swing, Christianity infiltrates the government, apocalyptic millennial narratives guide both foreign (anti-communist) and domestic (patriarchal family) politics in the US. The frame is the

god-fearing and the sinners, and the stakes on moral behavior are grave—positioning both the nation and the individual (family) for salvation or destruction.

Communist in the Cold War years meant heathen, god-less or often non-Christian. Jews in the fifties and sixties were equated with communists. In Madison, during the student movement of the sixties, the local papers made sure to use Jewish names when reporting on student demonstrations; it simply coded communist-heathen-threat.

And family? Family is constructed through law, public policies, religion, traditions, class, racism, anti-racism, sexism, anti-sexism, homophobia, etc. What do we mean by family in this time of denigrating working mothers while simultaneously enforcing “work-fare?” When fathers’ rights movements are in full swing, lesbian mothers are legally challenging their ex-partners’ right to mother a child they were raising together, families are kicked out of public housing if their kids break the law, ad nauseam. How about analyzing all the circulating meanings of family rather than instrumentally using it to say, what? We’re just like you! But maybe that is the point. We have abandoned the project of defining for ourselves and others what *we* want. We have instead allowed the conservative white suburbs that Alan Wolfe investigated (*One Nation, After All*) to define what we must ask for. Wolfe him-



### What do we mean by family in this time...?

self suggests that we, the one group people don't want in their communities (we're too in-your-face), should moderate our approach and speak their language. "Faith and Family," perfect. It is alarming that a shared realism or pragmatism has taken over our movement without thinking through the implications of what it means if we define our agenda to appease those who would exclude us.

#### We?

Birch and Perry say, "We are moving at a speed inconceivable even a generation ago." Well, maybe. Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani has sanctioned cameras in men's bathrooms—that's new. Gays and lesbians are purged from the military—not new, but the pace has picked up. States are swiftly preempting any

effect from the Hawaii same-sex marriage case—very new, although the attitudes are very old. The dismantling of the welfare state—swift and devastating. Prison expansion—very fast. Attacks on bilingualism and affirmative action—spreading. Who is this "we" they talk about? What we're left with is that the "we" is those queers who can successfully survive the marketplace. The rest are off the radar. A call for a "free market"—not new.

There are, of course, developments that do give us hope. The youth, for example. High school students are talking back, acting up—7000 strong at a queer youth march in Boston, including a group that came from Utah. AIDS activism has produced in many states government-sponsored, universal health care for people with

HIV. Now that's an achievement that should be the basis to demand such coverage for everyone. Adoptions by two unrelated adults—same-sex or not—are something to tout. Ecuador and South Africa are among a number of countries that have eliminated anti-sodomy laws. Mexico City's government sponsored a public conference on gay, lesbian, bi and transgender issues in May. "The United States is the single greatest violator of Human Rights under sodomy laws in the western world," according to legal experts. How about an international view on the 1990s? That would put the US in perspective, break down those ideologies of first world superiority: democratic vs. authoritarian governments, the modern and the backward, civilized and barbaric.

# march

## Personal Recollections

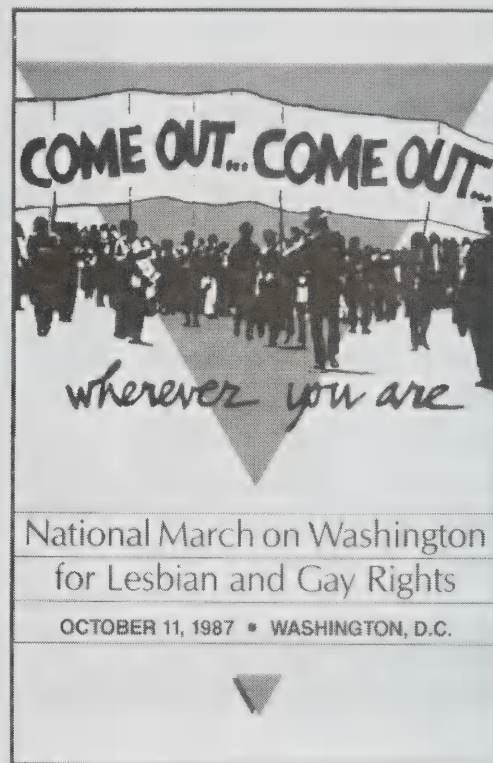
I wonder, after researching UFMCC, why it is that no one has publicly questioned the production of an event that promises to propel evangelicals into the limelight, enhance their authority, and sanction their drive to create a world-wide operation of missionaries to bring us to "salvation."

As a Jew, I'm disturbed that nobody has raised these issues. For me, it is not just being a Jew, but one who encountered evangelicals while growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, before they conquered the media and direct mail, and politicized their mission. As someone who grew up in a small midwestern town, the only Jew in my school, harassed and terrorized by evangelicals—as was the Rabbi and others—I sit and read MCC's founding principles and I'm right back in grade school—finding myself on a list of the "damned" whom they want to save through "the gospel of Jesus Christ." I am, involuntarily, swept up into those absolute frameworks so characteristic of those faiths that empower their followers to dictate the unwavering line that separates good and evil. As an outsider, being outside their faith, I am doomed.

The Jewish "community" of my town was too intimidated to stand up to anti-semitism. The Rabbi, in the terms of the time, thanks to the progressive Pope John 23rd (there was one once), used the ecumenical goals of some Christianity to help create "tolerance" and understanding among the different faiths. Of course, evangelicals didn't participate since they had nothing to learn: they had "the word of God," and out of "love" tried to convert the rest of us.

## Repressive Tolerance

In the US, we have never learned how to challenge religion, to take on, for example, what Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz calls "Christianism," Christian hegemony—without the fear that others will see this challenge as bigotry and intolerance. This suggests that tolerance has become a strategy to stop the challenges. Hey, "Can't we all just get along?" Tolerance as a goal is problematic when it is demanded equally of the powerful and those whose marginalization sustains their power. In the instance of the "Millennium March," tolerance



bars questioning the affiliations between the framing of the march and the politics it serves (wittingly or unwittingly). Serving up an uncritical menu of family values and religious revival in the current political moment stalls any attempt to understand how these have become the repressive terms of inclusion. While we may be trying to carve out spheres of safety, we are likewise revealing the pessimism we bring to creating an open society, a secular goal.

Few would argue that a national march is a bad thing. As others underline, national marches have transformed people's lives, expanded activism, awakened our desire for freedom. But with this call for a MMOW, we witness an important shift from "Break the Chains" (1979), "Come Out for Freedom" (1987) to "Faith and Family" in 2000. The open-ended desire and prospects for something different that earlier marches proposed have been abandoned, instead we signal "on a mass scale to the American people" our willingness, even eagerness, to stake our claims for inclusion on terms that ensure massive exclusions—of those who do not pass the (good behavior) standards of "faith" and "family."

# THE CALL

*The millennium controversies begin here. According to a number of organizations listed as endorsers, the sponsors of this event contacted them less than 24 hours before press time to sign on to this proposal—within two weeks they had put their endorsements on hold.—ed.*

## February 4, 1997

WASHINGTON — The nation's largest gay and lesbian political organization and the nation's largest gay faith-based movement announced plans today to sponsor a march on Washington in the spring of the year 2000. The event will be produced by veteran march organizer Robin Tyler who brought the organizations together to formulate planning.

The Human Rights Campaign and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches are exploring dates in spring 2000 for the "Millennium March on Washington for Equal Rights," the heads of both organizations said today. Several prominent organizations have signed on as endorsers, including the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

Representatives from these organizations and others will be sought to participate on an organizing committee which will help facilitate the organization and presentation of the event. "This march will set a new tone for a new century," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "Full equality under the law will be our achievement in the new millennium." "Together, we will solidify the gains we've made over the past decades and call upon our nation to live out its promise of liberty and justice for all," said the Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. "This march will set the pace for social justice and human rights."

The organizations are working closely with Tyler to produce the event. Tyler was an instrumental organizer/producer of the past three marches on Washington dating back to 1979. "Robin's depth of experience, community commitment and unstoppable energy uniquely qualify her to lead the organizing efforts for this historic event," said Birch and Perry. "This is a historic time in our movement. Although we have much greater visibility and a measure of cultural acceptance, we must not be lulled into a false sense of security," Tyler said. "This march will once again show the self esteem, strength and unwavering determination of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community." The last march was April 25, 1993, and attracted more than 1 million participants, according to organizers. The Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Churches is the world's largest and oldest predominantly gay Christian spirituality organization. Founded by Perry in 1968 with a commitment to social and spiritual justice and headquartered in West Hollywood, Calif., UFMCC is composed of more than 300 local congregations in 15 countries.



# THE PUBLIC DEBATE BEGINS

## Letter to the Editor

**March 4, 1998**

The millennium approaches. And as it does, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is right to focus on it as an opportunity. The symbolism of a new century can be a powerful one for all of us to bring the civil rights struggle for the lesbian and gay community front and center. Coupled with an election year, the turn of the century will present us with an opportunity to make history.

Consider our recent losses in Maine and Washington State. There are several lessons for us. (1) We must be smart, move fast, and work together. (2) more needs to be done to bolster our state-wide organizations and (3) educating swing voters will be key (and polls tell us that these voters are predominantly married and live outside urban areas.)

It is in the context of these lessons that any proposed tactics to welcoming in the millennium must be evaluated. Several ideas are currently being considered. The Human Rights Campaign and the Metropolitan Community Church, recognizing the opportunity that the new millennium will present has called for a national march on Washington in the spring of 2000. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force along with the Federation of Statewide Organizations Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Political Organizations, recognizing the need to mobilize locally, have proposed a fifty state initiative in 1999.

As these proposals are considered, a key question emerges: How do we best utilize the valuable resources of our community to maximize the opportunity presented by the millennium? Remember that resources should be broadly defined to include people and money.

A set of other more specific issues flows from the broader question above, each of which must be thoughtfully considered before moving forward.

- 1 If we are going to educate the public (with an eye on those swing voters) about hate-driven initiatives, we must have strong operations at the local level. Strong, vibrant state and local organizations, focusing their resources within, will be the linchpin. What strategy best addresses this?
- 2 In the year 2000, we have the opportunity to re-shape the political face of America by electing both national and local candidates supportive of our civil rights. How are our financial resources best allocated? Perhaps our money needs to stay in the trenches where we can focus efforts on fighting local and state ballot initiatives and electing supportive candidates.
- 3 Who will we be speaking to in the spring of 2000? When you consider that a new president and many new members of Congress will be elected later that year, a national march may be more effective the following year when we have an opportunity to engage a new administration and a new Congress in the issues of our community.

■ Is there ample time/funding/organization to mount successful statewide actions around the country? 1999 is just around the corner and there is much work to be done.

We look to this letter as a means to expand a vigorous scrutiny of all ideas under consideration. We believe strongly that decisions are richer for the debate. Further, we ask community leaders recognize our responsibility to engage our constituents in a public conversation on issues such as these and we commit to developing both formal and informal mechanisms for that conversation.

The Human Rights Campaign, Metropolitan Community Church and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force deserve our thanks for identifying the turn of the century as the extraordinary opportunity it is. We can set a new tone for a new century. But we must all be careful to avoid setting our tactics before we have agreed on our goals.

**Joan M. Garry**

Executive Director  
Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

**Brian K. Bond**

Executive Director  
Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund

**Lorri L. Jean**

Executive Director  
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center

**Kevin M. Cathcart**

Executive Director  
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

**Jubi Headley**

Executive Director  
National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum



seven days a week  
at night or early in the morning  
primary care, ob/gyn, dental,  
mental health, specialty services,  
acupuncture, massage and urgent care,  
all under one roof.



**GEIGER-GIBSON**  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER**  
250 MT. VERNON STREET, DORCHESTER  
**CALL 288-1140 FOR AN APPOINTMENT**

HARBOR HEALTH SERVICES, INC.

**FINANCE ASSOCIATE**

The Concord Consortium, a nonprofit educational technology organization, is seeking a Finance Associate to join its Concord, MA, headquarters.

Position handles ongoing bookkeeping, daily accounting, and administrative duties. Specific responsibilities include tax reporting, accounts receivable and banking, systems maintenance, project monitoring, contract relations, and budgets.

Requirements: Bachelor's degree in related field with 2-5 years of experience. Computer proficiency a must and Excel and Macintosh skills necessary. Knowledge of QuickBooks helpful. Experience in high tech environment, preferably in a nonprofit setting, is desirable.

**The Concord Consortium**

FAX: 978-371-0696 search@concord.org  
37 Thoreau Street, Concord, MA 01742  
<http://www.concord.org>

*Please contact us with  
a cover letter, resume,  
and salary history.*

# THE DEFENSE

*The March 4, 1998 letter from five national organizations generated this response within less than a day. Here Elizabeth Birch and Troy Perry identify the priorities of our community as family and faith. While the March 4 letter stated that "decisions are richer for the debate", Birch and Perry respond that we should not "become mired in the mud fight that has emerged among those who would criticize this idea..."—ed.*

22

## NEWS RELEASE from the Human Rights Campaign

1101 14th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
email: hrc@hrc.org

### March 5, 1998

We believe our community has an opportunity to welcome the new century in a fresh way with a Millennium March for Equality in the year 2000. Inside and outside of our organizations, we have felt much enthusiasm around the country for the proposed march.

In the year 2000, the entire nation will be looking for new trends and fresh messages. We have an opportunity, if not an obligation, to use this wave to effectively shift the paradigm of perceptions about gay people. Given that, we concluded early involvement could provide an opportunity to shape the messages such a gathering will impart to the nation and to avoid some of the pitfalls of prior marches.

We believe that in the early 1990s, gay America entered an entirely new period that has gone largely unlabeled and unanalyzed. Shaped partly by the AIDS crisis and partly by the groundswell of people coming out and living honestly, the priorities of our community have changed dramatically. We are looking for ways to find stability in our relationships, health, homes and communities. We are in the middle of a gay baby boom. The desire to legally marry has emerged as an extremely important goal for many gay Americans. Many of us are returning to the churches of our youth or finding new ways to express our spirituality.

We are also living in a time when, despite the best efforts and significant financing of the extreme right, the country is moving forward. We have seen important shifts in public attitudes and institutions, particularly in the workplace. The journey is not without struggle and setbacks, but we are moving at a speed inconceivable even a generation ago.

The shift we have described has NEVER been effectively communicated on a mass scale to the American people. A Millennium March provides a remarkable opportunity to dramatically demonstrate what it means to be gay in this nation at the turn of the century. This march is an unprecedented opportunity to celebrate our diversity as a community of family, spirituality and equality. This march should be absolutely inclusive—gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and straight.

### THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF SUCH A MARCH ARE MYRIAD.

- This is a tremendous opportunity for every LGBT organization to build membership. People will come in huge numbers for this march, and they will be looking for a variety of activities. Groups could plan anything from street fairs to forums, workshops to cultural events.
- Most people who took up gay civil rights work in recent years were inspired at a march on Washington. Everything from ACT-UP to the "Free Sharon Kowalski" movement were born out of marches on Washington. No matter where the passion goes, it is

important to provide a medium where new leadership and ideas can spawn.

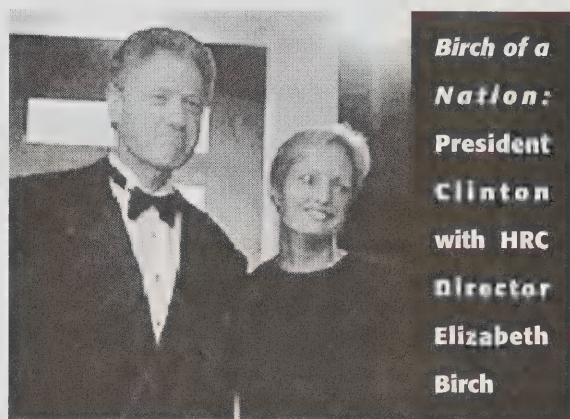
- The year 2000 is a presidential election year and the LGBT segment of the electorate will be courted as never before. This is also an incredible opportunity to organize people to work in campaigns and to lobby their members of Congress when they are here.
- Even those people who cannot travel to Washington will be able to share the march on television, perhaps holding house parties for friends and families.
- Although no decisions have been made regarding excess revenue, a national march is probably one of the few ways to raise the kind of funds needed at the statewide level.

Over the past five years, we have invested heavily at the state level, responding to crisis after crisis. We have channeled thousands of dollars in these battles and for the most part, we have won. All of the statewide anti-gay ballot initiatives have been defeated and, thanks to the work of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Colorado Legal Initiative Project and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled favorably in the Colorado case.

But our statewide organizations remain in dire need of investment. The leadership in many states is excellent, but with a few notable exceptions, most of our statewide organizations are severely lacking in capacity-building and general investment. Moreover, they need pooled funding for polling, research, message development and a network of crack lobbyists.

Some critics of the march have used the recent loss in Maine as a basis to argue that a national march shouldn't take place because some other plan would produce the investment needed at the state level. We believe this is a faulty analysis. First, there are millions of dollars available in the community not accessed by any organization. The last march should be instructive. Gay Americans spent more than \$170 million to attend that march. With proper planning, some of this revenue can be captured by the march entity.

Others have argued a Millennium March would detract from a 50-State Action being planned for 1999 by the Federation of Statewide Organizations. We see



the two events as complementary. And we believe that state actions alone will not capture the imagination of most LGBT Americans, nor will they shake the desire for a national millennial event. We believe the national march is the natural follow-on to bring energy and excitement to these proposed statewide actions.

Critics of the march concept have argued that the statehouses are where all the action is, but the fact is we need to be strong, bold and strategic as a movement at every level. The statehouses are where the state action is. Congress, the executive branch and the U.S. Supreme Court are alive and well and able to do harm and/or good on any given day. And gay citizens of many states will never win their civil rights without a national effort. One of the best examples is AIDS. Congress appropriated \$1 billion for HIV/AIDS last year. Imagine where we would be today if the states had to fight this battle alone.

We think a national march in the year 2000 is an incredible opportunity for all of the above reasons. Rather than become mired in the mud fight that has emerged among those who would criticize this idea, we would like to invite them—and you—to participate in what we believe will be the most exciting demonstration of our unity and power at a seminal moment in time.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director**

Human Rights Campaign

**The Rev. Troy Perry, Founder**

Metropolitan Community Churches

## THE DEFENSE

*A "Letter to the Editor" from Robin Tyler, Executive Producer of the Millennium March on Washington for Equal Rights 2000*

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR MARCH 6, 1998

#### Historical Perspective

In the spring of 2000, our lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community will once again "March on Washington." This is a crucial time in our history, and we need to have a National March. Although we have received some cultural acceptance, and are finally recognized as a community by the media, and certainly are targeted by corporations as consumers, the plain and simple fact is we have no rights.

On the Federal level, we have not passed ENDA, and do not have the right to work. DOMA (the Defense of Marriage Act) is to stop us from marrying. James Hormel's confirmation as an ambassador is almost dead, not because he isn't qualified, but because he's gay. The "don't ask, don't tell" military policy has escalated the number of gays and lesbians who are being forced out of the military. Because we have become more visible, violence against us has increased enormously.

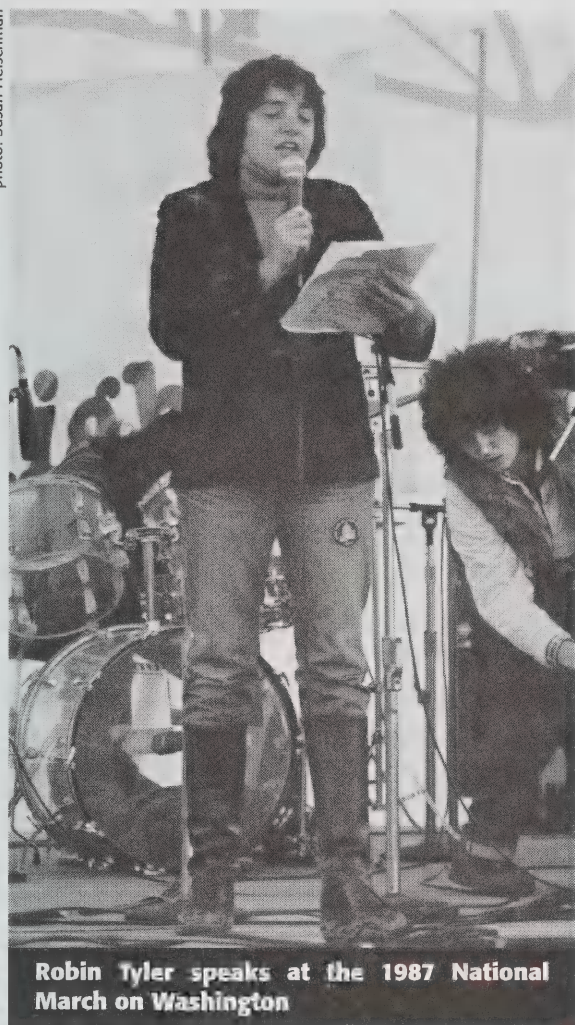
Many organizations want to do state marches in 1999. They feel that more work needs to be done to bolster statewide organizations. I agree. But, as an older activist, and an organizer for over 30 years, we must not erase our history. We have been working at all levels, city, state and national, for decades. We have had state marches (here in California we had two, the first being as a result of the March on Washington). We must continue to organize on the state level. We must continue to keep the pressure on at every level of government. To March on the States in 1999, and to follow this with a March on Washington in 2000 will be very, very powerful. There is nothing as moving as the visibility of hundreds of thousands of us gathered together in Washington, and a National March allows those who will not come out on a state level, to participate.

The last March was held after the presidential elections. That was too late. We relied on the promises of political parties that were not kept. This time, we will show our

strength, our unity and our commitment, and our goals before the elections.

Historically, in previous Marches, organizations either did not want us to March (as in the first March in 1979, where we were told we would threaten the gains of our movement and "drain the resources of our community") or organizations came very late to the table (as in the second March in 1989, where we were told a March on Washington would "drain the resources of our community"). Of course, we went through the battle of "Don't March" in 1993 as it would conflict with our celebration of Stonewall in 1994 and also, "drain the resources of our community." But we felt it was up to the community to decide where to spend their money. All three times, despite being battered by the forces of our own people who did not want us to have a National March, we continued to organize successful marches on Washington. These marches acted as reinforcing fuel to the life force of our movement. They energized us for years.

photo: Susan Fleischman



**Robin Tyler speaks at the 1987 National March on Washington**

In 1979, 100,000 of us attended the first march, and we wept as we embraced each other by the Washington Monument, faced the White House, and demanded our Rights. I emceed and line-produced the main stage. The rally was heard over National Radio. We knew we had made history.

The second March (attendance 1 million) gave birth to "The Quilt" and "The Wedding Ceremony." The wedding ceremony was so controversial within our own community at that time. Little did we know that only a decade later, we would fight for this to become a reality for our community. I produced the Main Stage Rally and although television and newspapers covered the March, both *Time* and *Newsweek* did not. They said we had not notified them in time. Today we have been on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

By the 3rd March in 1993, we still had no rights, but more and more people, including famous personalities, were beginning to come out. Melissa Ethridge, Martina Navratilova, Sir Ian McKellen, the Indigo Girls, as well as straight celebrity supporters such as Cybil Shepherd and Judith Light appeared on that stage. We honored those of our community who had served and were forced out of the military, and wept, as the mother of Alan Shindler (the young gay man who was murdered in the navy) and one million of us paid tribute to his memory. And for the first time, CSPAN covered us, and we were seen all over this Nation, and on CNN, all over the world. And once again, we called for equal rights. I co-produced that stage. Since that third March, the media has given us tremendous coverage and recognized us as a community.

But we are more than just a community. And we are not the gay 'industry.' We are a movement, and movements in order to survive and thrive, must move. We must mount a successful statewide action in 1999 and we must March on Washington in Spring of 2000. We have received overwhelming support from grassroots members of our community who attended other Marches on Washington, or who have heard of them and want to participate in the next one. UFMCC and HRC came aboard immediately, and the National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organizations have been unwavering in their support.

This should not be a battle over state marches vs. a national march. I presented a financial plan to HRC and MCC that I believe will raise enough money not only to cover the March, but to possibly raise money for organizations who are fighting for our rights on every level. This march will be televised nationally and all over the world, so millions of people who cannot afford to participate in any March, can be a part of this great experience. We will put our children on stage, and our parents, and show our diversity, and our unwavering commitment. We will honor our youth and our elders. Our courage, our will to live, and our strength through the struggle, while maintaining our humor and our ability to love, have made us extraordinary. We will not stop until we have equal rights. This **continued on page 11**

## THE DEFENSE

*The National Latino/A Lesbian & Gay Organization signed on in the beginning and has been an unwavering supporter of the Millennium March.—ed.*

**A Public Statement by  
Nicole Ramírez-Murray,  
National Co-Chair NATIONAL  
LATINO/A LESBIAN & GAY  
ORGANIZATION (LLEGO)  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

26

### **"BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME: MILLENNIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON 2000"**

#### **March 6, 1998**

The current national discussion of the upcoming Millennium March on Washington 2000 by leaders and national organizations is very productive for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement.

As an activist who was involved in all three previous Marches (serving on the National Executive Committee of the 1987 and 1993 Marches), I can honestly say that this same type of public discussion and debate proceeded every one of our previous marches, with most national organizations and leaders coming on board almost at the end.

In fact, when Harvey Milk became one of the most vocal activists calling for the first March on Washington in the late 1970's, he was roundly criticized. But then, his assassination became a rallying cry by many for our first March in 1979.

Our Marches on Washington really never have been about the leaders and national organizations, but more

about the grassroots members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered community wanting to go to Washington and, like other Americans, to be seen and heard regarding the issues which are important to us. We have come by the hundreds of thousands, and we want to March on Washington once again in the year 2000.

I am presently National Co-Chair of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization which was founded during the weekend of the 1987 March. This is but one example of the many inspiring results of our marches. The national marches have not only birthed new organizations, but countless new activists have been born as a result of them.

As a person of color, I more than see the importance of a Millennium March on Washington because it is not only the LGBT community, but also the Latino/a community which has become the focus (and the new whipping boy) of the Radical Right.

The previous marches brought Cesar Chavez, Jesse Jackson, the directors of the NAACP and the National Organization for Women, and other civil rights leaders and organizations to appear and join us in our continuing battle for equal rights. The national Marches produced unprecedented coalition building.

The Millennium March on Washington once again gives us a great opportunity to show America the determination of our movement and our allies in our struggle for equality.

The facts are that the Million Man March and the Promise Keepers March brought the world's attention to



**Building coalitions?**

Washington, DC, and we will do so again for our March in 2000.

The idea and vision for the Millennium March on Washington was brought to San Diego to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's 10th Anniversary "Creating Change Conference" by veteran activist, pioneer, and previous March Producer, Robin Tyler. The Human Rights Campaign and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches have become the lead organizations and we as the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization have joined them as equal partners. We call upon others to join this historic undertaking.

As history has proven, GLBT Americans have never been affected by the usual politics and debates around our previous marches.

History has proven that when it comes to LGBT National Marches on Washington, "build it and they will come".

**Nicole Ramírez-Murray, National Co-Chair of LLEGO National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization, Washington, DC**

**Robin Tyler continued from page 25**

includes the right to work, to live without violence, to marry, to keep our children, to serve our country, to support our health issues, and all of the other benefits non-gays have in this country. And until that happens, like the Phoenix, against all odds, we have and will continue to rise, again and again, and to March on Washington, and to never stop the struggle until we have full equality. We owe it to our future generations.

We will do it with dignity and self-esteem and love.

And we will win.

#### **Robin Tyler**

Executive Producer  
Millennium March on  
Washington for Equal Rights  
2000 (LGBT)

INQUIRE  
WITHIN

STEPHEN  
HARRINGTON  
LMHC

COUNSELING FOR  
LESBIANS AND GAY MEN  
6 BIGELOW STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139  
617.491.0968

THE  
DEFENSE

*With challenges circulating in the press and on the internet, Troy Perry continues the counter attack. When Perry cites polls to show the breadth of grassroots support, he bypasses the demographics and strategies employed to get those results. The DataLounge poll has demographics of 75 percent men with a majority identifying as managerial, professional or computer techs. For the Advocate poll, HRC sent out a mailing to their members giving them the web site and asking them to support the March. We're not exactly talking democracy here.—ed.*

28

## Six important Ways YOU can support the Millennium March!

**March 28, 1998**

**From the Rev. Troy D. Perry,  
Moderator, Universal  
Fellowship of Metropolitan  
Community Churches**

**Dear Friend:**

I want to keep you fully updated as plans unfold for the Millennium March on Washington—and I want to share ways you can help to make this the most successful human rights March on Washington in our his-

tory.

The grassroots response to the Millennium March has been overwhelmingly positive. And many national, regional and local organizations have signed on as endorsers and supporters of the March.

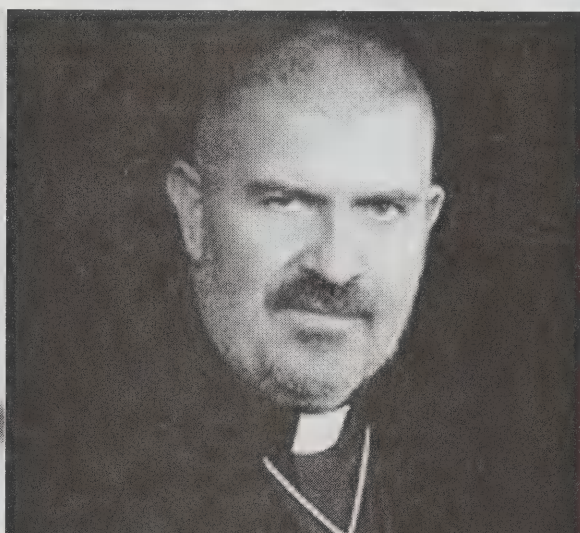
At the same time, the reality is that some national organizations have withheld their support. And, interestingly, some gay newspapers have also withheld their support at this time.

So many of you have written to

ask what you can do and how you can participate in the Millennium March on Washington for Equality.

If you support the vision of the Millennium March... there are six very specific, very definite steps YOU can take this week:

- 1** Send an e-mail to Robin Tyler, Executive Director of the Millennium March. Let her know of your support. Ask to be added to her e-mail list for regular updates on the March. If you are willing to volunteer in any capacity—or willing to assist with local organizing in your area—let her know. She may be reached by e-mail at [RobinTyler@aol.com](mailto:RobinTyler@aol.com).
- 2** Write an open letter or letter to the editor of all the gay newspapers and magazines which serve your area. Be brief—but share your commitment to the March. Tell them why you support this March. Tell them that the “grassroots support” is strong. Tell them that every segment of the GLBT community is invited and encouraged to participate in the March. Tell them that this March



**Spirituality then and now: Sister Boom Boom (left) and Rev. Troy D. Perry.**

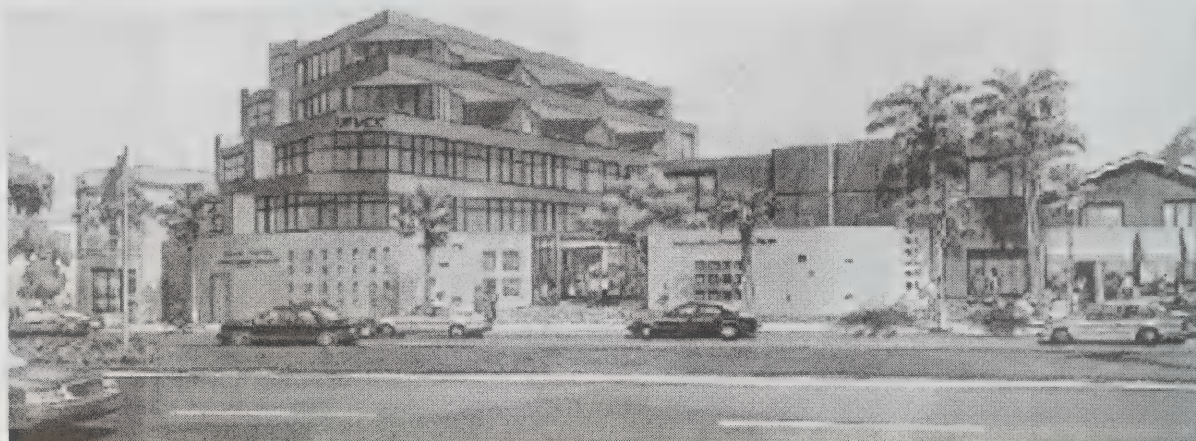
will set the pace for Human Rights in the new millennium. Share Robin Tyler's e-mail address for those who wish to volunteer.

- 3 Encourage local and regional groups in your area to endorse the Millennium March on Washington. Endorsers will receive frequent, up-to-date information on the March. We want broad, open participation from all segments of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities: pride groups, HIV/AIDS organizations, legal and human rights groups, faith communities, support organizations, etc.
- 4 Contact the UFMCC Communications Department for a sample, fill-in-the-blanks news release which can be used by local and regional organizations and churches to announce their endorsement and support of the Millennium March. (Remember, local groups, chapters and churches from all organizations can serve as endorsers of the March.) Send your e-mail request of the sample news release to [Communications@ufmcchq.com](mailto:Communications@ufmcchq.com). Simply fill out the sample news release with your organization's information and send it to both the gay and mainline press in your area. You'll help promote the March—and generate media coverage for your organization, too.

- 5 Make a commitment to organize a group from your area to attend the March. Be a leader in this movement! Share information with your local churches and organizations. Over the next several months, Robin Tyler will be working closely with local organizers to provide details and strategies for organizing local groups.

- 6 Contact the national groups which currently are withholding their endorsements. While the grassroots support for the March has been overwhelming positive and strong (including an 80% approval rating from the DataLounge Internet survey!), many of the GLBT national organizations say they have not heard from their local members and supporters. They will not take a positive stand until they hear from friends such as you.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do to help move this forward is to send an e-mail message to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum (NBLGLF). Tell them you are the grassroots and that you support the March. If you are a contributor, member or supporter of these organizations, be sure to men-



**Moving forward: UFMCC's \$5 million World Center complex, to be dedicated June, 1999.**

30

tion that, too. Ask them to come on board and to endorse the March. Let them know how much we want and need—and expect—their support.

Here are the addresses to contact:

*National Gay & Lesbian Task Force: [ngltf@ngltf.org](mailto:ngltf@ngltf.org)*

*National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum: [nblglf@aol.com](mailto:nblglf@aol.com)*

I am asking all supporters of the March to take these six steps this week to keep us moving forward. Perhaps right now—while this is fresh in your mind—you'll send your two e-mail messages to the NGLTF and the NBLGLE.

Again, I am thankful to so many friends, supporters and leaders who have embraced the vision of the Millennium March on

Washington—and thankful to folks like yourself who keep us moving forward. Thank you for your commitment to justice and equality.

For social and spiritual justice for all people,

**(The Rev.) Troy D. Perry**  
**Moderator of the UFMCC**

P.S. While I deeply respect those who have expressed differing opinions on the Millennium March, I simply don't want to see any of our national organizations holding back from full participation because they have not heard from their grassroots supporters. As an organizational leader, I both want and need to hear from our grassroots constituency. This is true of

all our wonderful GLBT organizations and leaders.

Gandhi once said (and I am paraphrasing), "I must find out where my people are going. For I am their leader." History's greatest movements have been grassroots movements. And history's greatest leaders have been those who heeded the call of their grassroots members. I am encouraging the people who are the heart of the GLBT movement—the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered men and women who live and work for justice in the heartland of America's towns and cities and counties to make your voice heard by the leaders of our national organizations. Our movement will be better and stronger because of your participation.

# Poll Results

Following is an excerpt from an on-line poll done in March at the DataLounge website. The demographics of those who visit that site are 75 percent men, more than half have managerial, professional or computer tech jobs and the majority make more than \$30,000 a year. This poll and the Advocate poll (84 percent in favor) have been used by Troy Perry and Robin Tyler to show the grassroots support for the march. The favorable vote of the Advocate poll were in part the result of a campaign by HRC to get their members to vote, including sending them the website address.

## 1. The first question measured respondents support for the event:

Strongly support	72.95%
Support	21.98%

## 2. Would you support a national march on Washington behind the themes of "gay families" and "faith"?

Strongly support	28.64%
Support	37.86%
Uncertain	19.17%
Against	9.22%
Strongly against	5.10%

## 3. Do you agree with critics of the HRC and MCC that their proposed themes for the march are too conservative?

Strongly agree	7.51%
Agree	27.60%
Uncertain	31.72%
Disagree	22.52%
Strongly disagree	10.65%

## 4. Presenting a conservative or "safe" image of the gay and lesbian community is politically desirable.

Strongly agree	16.02%
Agree	41.99%
Uncertain	19.42%
Disagree	18.93%
Strongly disagree	3.64%

## 5. While it may be politically desirable, presenting a conservative image of gay men and lesbians robs the community of its interest, otherness, and vitality.

Strongly agree	14.32%
Agree	35.44%
Uncertain	10.68%
Disagree	28.88%
Strongly disagree	10.68%

Here only 23.5 percent of respondents think that presenting a conservative or "safe" image of the gay and lesbian community is not politically desirable. How does race, gender and class figure in this "safe" and conservative image? Remember, it was Marlon Rigg's film, *Tongues Untied*, that was used by Pat Buchanan in his presidential bid of 1992 to dramatize the need to defund the NEA and PBS. Note next that about 50 percent are willing to rob "the community of its interest, otherness, and vitality" in order to appeal to those who hate us.



**New Words**  
A Women's Bookstore

## FABULOUS COLLECTION OF LESBIAN AND WOMEN'S TITLES

MAGAZINES • CARDS • TAPES & CDS  
VIDEOS • JEWELRY • T-SHIRTS • POSTERS  
AND MORE!

**New Words** A Women's Bookstore

186 Hampshire Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

617-876-5310

Full Mail Order Service Available!



*Funding social change since 1967*

Some recent grants include:

Bromfield Street Educational Fund (Boston, MA);  
Lesbian Community Project (Portland, OR); Long  
Island Gay and Lesbian Youth (Levittown, NY);  
Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League—Youth  
Council (Washington, DC); Just Economics  
(Albany, CA); Houston Committee for Youth and  
Non-Military Opportunities (Bellaire, TX); Aurora: A  
Northland Lesbian Center (Minneapolis, MN)

For grant information, Newsletter subscriptions,  
or to make a donation, contact:

**Resist**

259 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144  
617/623-5110, resistinc@igc.apc.org

march

## CHALLENGES

*Nadine Smith's letter and Billy Hileman's editorial were the key challenges circulating on the internet and in the gay press.—ed.*

## Stop the March Madness

### An Open Letter to the Community

by Nadine Smith

#### March 31, 1998

I've spent a great deal of time pondering the recent turn of events that now has us grappling with what to do about the proposed Millennium March.

Because I was as a national co-chair of the 1993 March, people have frequently asked for my opinion on this situation. I've taken time before responding publicly because I understand how casually critical some people can be and I have worked hard not to be one of those who would rather attack our own than focus on our enemies.

But now I've come to realize that there is much more at stake here than hammering out the logistics of a march. In fact, what is at stake here is the very heart of our movement.

Currently, a huge segment of grassroots community leaders and many national groups believe that this march is ill-timed, strategical-

ly weak and coordinated by people out of touch with the important work happening outside of Washington D.C. Even US Rep. Barney Frank, the most politically prominent openly gay elected official in the country called the proposed march "a diversion of resources" and "not a good idea." And yet, rather than set up a structure for meaningful dialogue to balance pros and cons and evaluate the strategy of such a march, edicts are delivered via press release.

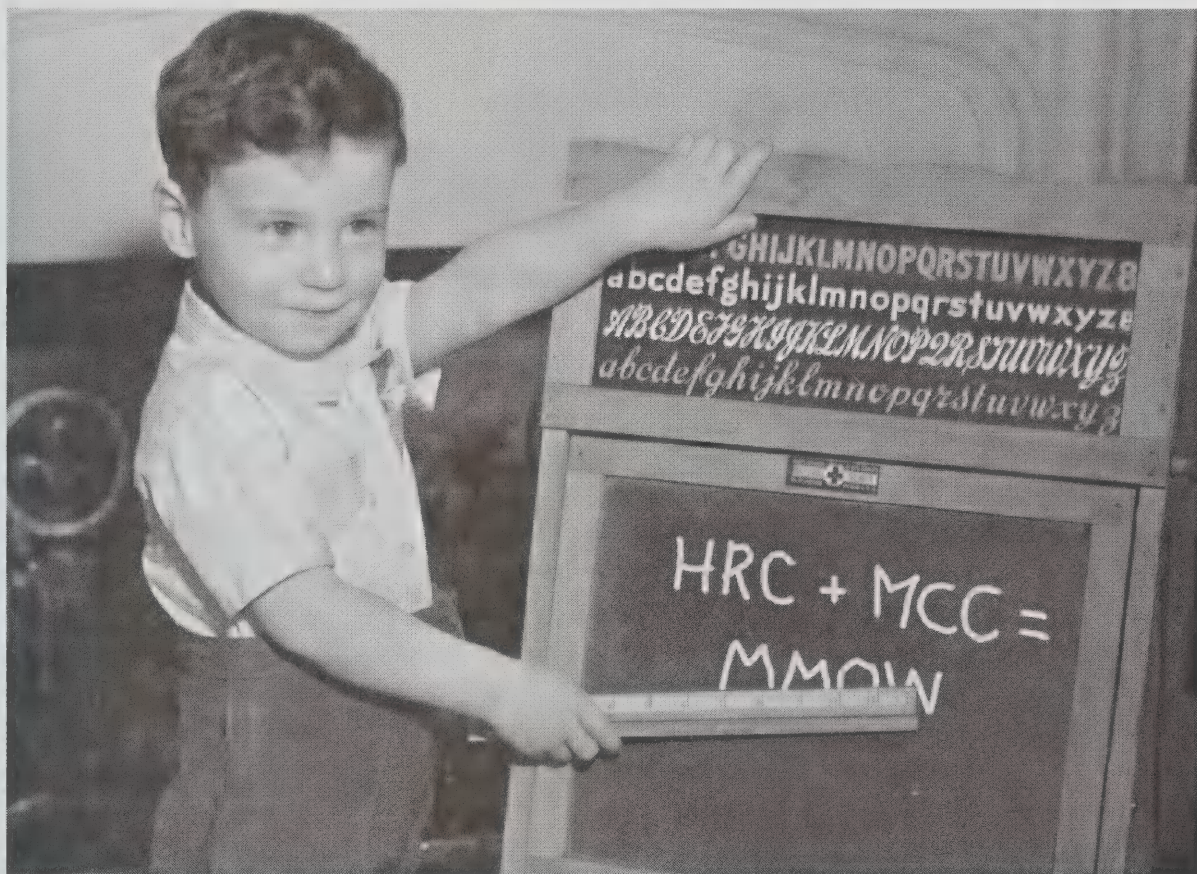
The Human Rights Campaign, the largest group involved in advocating for the march has publicly apologized for the ham-fisted manner in which it has approached the issue and that is good. However, it is not enough to say "sorry" and continue to move forward on the same misguided course.

In the past, a critical mass of support has been established before committing the enormous resources that marches require. Now, it appears, instead of doing the work of building broad-based support for such an effort, the movement is being hijacked and strategy and coalition-building have been thrown out the window.

We must decide whether this is a movement for social and political change that will continue to build and grow and grapple with the tough issues. Or will we be a product to be packaged and shaped according to the dictates of the latest focus group? We can't replace courage with marketing.

There is without a doubt tremendous power in marching on Washington. My first March in 1987 was a significant turning point in my life. But this debate is not about the value of marches. It is about whether we best serve this movement by going to Washington in 2000, a major election year, and how we decide when and if the time is right.

Three times in the past two decades we've come to Washington D.C. and the community was told go home and build. Well, we've built and built and



built and back home is where it is all happening.

For over a decade the idea of a march on the 50 state capitals has been gaining steam and for the first time there exist enough organizations to make this a powerful event. To truly have a strong national presence that isn't merely a paper tiger, building local and state networks that can gain ground at home and feed the national effort is vital.

Talk to young people who are coming out. While they are thrilled to see Ellen and Martina and Greg and other celebrities, what they really want to see are people in their own communities who have lives similar to the ones they imagine for themselves. A gay janitor or principal. An openly gay business person or reporter in town. They especially want to see couples whose relationships are lasting and loving right in their own backyard so they know that is possible without being a rock star, television actor or moving to some gay mecca.

People have called marches on D.C. glamorous and

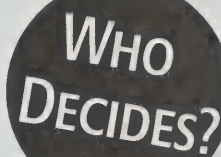
media sexy events. That is perhaps our biggest problem. Too many people are wondering how they can become the Martin Luther King, Jr. for our movement when we are in desperate need of a million Rosa Parks. Weird mistaking style for real substance. We used to be a movement willing to demand full equality but savvy enough to occasionally settle for half a loaf. Now half is all we ask for and we seem grateful enough that we were granted an audience. We've traded true activism for occasional access at the national level. I was part of the first gay delegation to meet in the Oval office with President Clinton. Sure, it was a historic moment but I still came home to a state where I can be fired, denied housing and barred from adopting because of my sexual orientation; where sodomy laws remain on the books and gay kids are still threatened, beat up and harassed in schools.

At the brink of the next millennium, people aren't waiting to come to D.C. to come out. In fact, the people who are coming out in record

continued on page 11

## CHALLENGES

# MILLENNIUM MARCH—

WHO  
DECIDES?

34

**by Billy Hileman**

The current debate of a LGBT civil rights event in Washington, D.C. in 2000 may look like “political in-fighting” if one only takes a quick glance. But just below the surface is one of the most important community discussions to occur in decades. Our community is in the process of redefining the movement.

If organizing for a national LGBT civil rights event in Washington proceeds on its current course, then progressive, grassroots, democratic organizing in our community will suffer a serious injury.

The tragedy of this situation is that the Human Rights Campaign’s (HRC) executive director Elizabeth Birch, comedian Robin Tyler, and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches’ Troy Perry are the willing architects of this attack on queer democracy.

Right now, Perry, Birch, and Tyler are frantically lobbying the community to support an event they decided to produce. They are trying to prop up grassroots support for an event only they had input on. Perry has just sent out a letter with “six very specific steps, very definite steps” ...to lobby congress? ...no, to lobby the president? ...no, to zap Jesse Helms? No. Troy Perry is asking you to lobby the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum to support the Millennium March! What’s wrong with that? In Troy Perry’s plea for help, he says, “If you are a contributor, member or supporter of these organizations, be sure to mention that too.” That is sickening.

The Millennium March is about money. It is not about whether 2000 is a good year to rally in Washington. It is not about ENDA, or domestic partnership, or about lesbians and gays in the military. Right now there is only one organization in our community with the resources to support a huge national action in Washington. And there



**March on Washington, 1987**

is only one organization that has vowed to have 1 million members by the year 2000—HRC.

Never before has one of our organizations been in a position to unilaterally call for a March on Washington. The Millennium March is a test of HRC's new power. It is a test of whether the community will allow HRC to circumvent the progressive, grassroots, democratic principles that were the basis of the three previous marches and the heart of our movement.

At the end of Perry's letter, he writes, "History's greatest movements have been grassroots movements. And history's greatest leaders have been those who heeded the call of their grassroots members." But there has been no "call." HRC and UFMCC didn't allow the forum for a "call." And now that people are voicing their concern about the process, Birch, Tyler and Perry are putting a call out to the grass-roots instead of the other way around.

In March of 1991 the executive directors of NGLTF and HRCE, Urvashi Vaid and Tim McFeeley hosted a meeting in Washington, D.C. for activists to discuss a third march on Washington (MOW). Minneapolis City Council member Brian Coyle had pushed the idea at the 1990 Creating Change Conference. During the March '91 meeting, and a second national meeting in May, dozens of proposals and concerns were discussed by hundreds of activists.

Proposals for marches in 1992 and 1993 were discussed. Bi-annual MOWs with a permanent committee; 52 regional marches: states, DC and Puerto Rico; and a MOW before every presidential election were all proposed. Stonewall 25 organizers pleaded that no national action take place before 1994. A call for inclusion of youth in the organizing was made and a request to be aware of the dates of the many women's music

# march

festivals was voiced. Native American gays and lesbians explained that they could not participate in the fall of 1992—the 500th anniversary of the survival of indigenous cultures. And that is a very small sample.

In 1998, all that expression and creativity has been silenced in one meeting between Perry, Birch, and Tyler. They want to control the timing, message and money associated with the Millennium March. They may achieve that. But in the process, they'll lose the movement. Arrogance is not the word. Only sheer contempt for democracy can describe their organizing style.

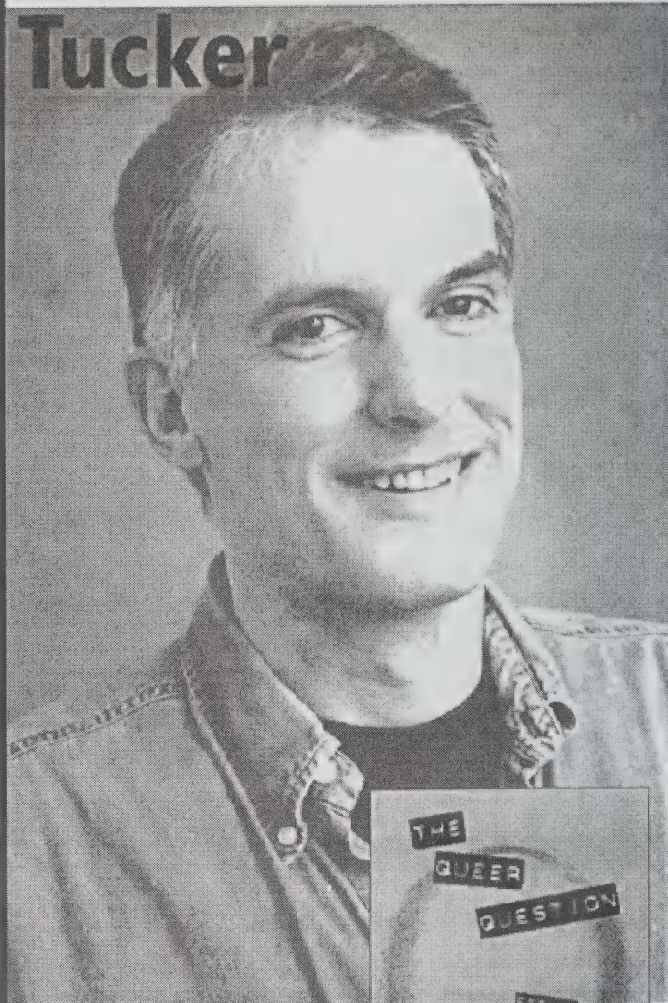
Several national leaders authored letters distributed at the 1991 meetings explaining why a march before 1994 was misguided. Where are their voices now? Some of the very same people have privately expressed their concerns about the Millennium March, but won't do so publicly. Why? They're afraid that in the year 2000, they'll be on the outside looking in. There shouldn't be an outside. Organizing a national civil rights event without a grassroots "call" is exclusive no matter how much multicultural rhetoric they try to pour over it.

But its worse than that. Birch is smart enough to know that Barney Frank is right when he says that big marches do nothing politically for the community. All that stuff about the political benefits of being in Washington before the election is a lie. Birch wants her Millennium March so she can get her 1,000,000 members and the associated loot. Grassroots democracy might produce 50 state marches. Big bummer for Birch.

In a recent *Out* magazine article, Birch responds to her critics by saying, "Imagine what you would have done if three years ago you woke up and found that someone had handed you the movement, ... I'll bet that you would have made most of the decisions I made." It's time to wake up again. It's not your movement. We can help.

**Billy Hileman is a Pittsburgh based activist and was one of four national co-chairs for the 1993 March on Washington.**

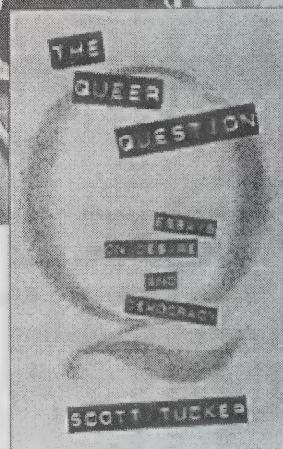
## new from Scott Tucker



### The Queer Question

Essays on Desire and Democracy

\$17.00/ISBN 0-89618-577-5



Scott Tucker issues a fierce clarion call to radicals and queers to be true to the democratic potential of the United States.

Whether the topic is Bill Clinton or Ralph Nader, sex or science, Tucker argues for a society in which radical kinship, solidarity, and desire are part of a healthy civil society.

With a foreword by Sarah Schulman.

Available from independent bookstores.  
Or call 1-800-533-8478 to order.

South End Press



Nadine Smith *continued from page 33*

numbers need local structures to provide real assistance not just symbolic gestures far away. If ENDA is to pass nationwide it will come because the constituents back home sway legislators. We must have strong local groups, that form strong statewide groups, that support a strong national effort. Now is a great time to establish that priority.

As I think back on the 1993 March, I am proud of the diversity displayed throughout the organizing and the March itself. But I agree with those who criticize the presence of Lea DeLaria and a few other performers who lost sight of the March as a political act. It is however, astounding that having launched that criticism, HRC would then turn to the person responsible for putting that part of the March stage together to produce the next one.

Criticisms of Robin Tyler as the producer of this proposed march cannot be dismissed as "dredging up old stuff." HRC and the other sponsors must address directly Tyler's reputation for racism, exclusion, and questionable business dealings. I have heard Tyler describe efforts at inclusion as the "tyranny of the grassroots." I've witnessed her sabotage group decisions that she disagrees with. While publicly purporting to be supportive of the transgender and bisexual communities, I've watched her work behind the scenes to try and ensure their exclusion. With her installed at the helm, promises of a broad-based, inclusive decision-making process ring hollow.

Over the years, HRC has developed a reputation for pulling money out of local communities without giving back, for swooping into town, treating the local organizers like rubes and setting up parallel organizing structures without respect to the wishes, knowledge or insights of the people who must live with the fallout. Now HRC has an opportunity to demonstrate a new attitude that supports those who work outside the D.C. beltway.

I state all of this as someone who has supported HRC since long before they dropped the "F" from their name. I have attended fund raisers and urged people to open

their check books. I received the HRC's national award for activism and just recently traveled with a member of their field staff to help organize in South Florida. I will support every effort to empower and strengthen local and statewide organizations because I believe it is the recipe for national success.

I believe that good people work at HRC who are passionate about achieving the same things I care so deeply about. And while the organization provides an important and powerful voice in the national media, I think too many of its leaders are woefully out of touch with the pulse of this movement and the shifting political ground. I fear we are headed for a massive, strategically foolish, financially draining march simply because a handful of people like the alliteration in the phrase "Millennium March" and their eyes flash dollar signs whenever they say it.

I have yet to hear a cogent, persuasive argument for a national march in 2000. I'm open to it. If convinced no one would work harder to bring folks to it. But right now I believe our priority is back home. We need massive voter identification efforts so we can start winning elections for ourselves and our supporters. We need to lobby our elected officials in their home districts. We need to build our memberships and fundraise for the referendums we continue to face on the local and state level.

Those of us who believe that our movement should not be strong-armed have a responsibility to speak up instead of accepting this as a "done deal." For HRC's own good, for our community's benefit, we need to make clear that this march will not go on as it is now conceived. HRC is the wealthiest and largest gay organization in the country. I hope that it is big enough to admit its mistake and begin to heal this divide. This is not the way for us to greet the next millennium.

**Nadine Smith served as one of four national co-chairs for the 1993 March on Washington. She is currently Executive Director for the Human Rights Task Force of Florida and is a lobbyist at the state legislature on behalf of 17 Florida-based GLBT and allied organizations working to end discrimination.**

# march

*The following two press releases, one on the Millennium March, the other on the 1999 State Actions were issued simultaneously. These statements were a product of a meeting of national executive directors where contentious debate occurred and a compromise was struck. As we go to press an invitation-only 2 day gathering is planned for June 9 and 10 in Washington DC. Yet to be resolved among the national leaders is who will define this "millennial" event.—ed.*

**Thursday, April 30, 1998**

## MILLENNIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON SET FOR APRIL 30, 2000

*Organizers Express Enthusiastic Support for "Equality Begins at Home" State Actions*

WASHINGTON—Organizers for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community's fourth March on Washington today announced the event will be held on April 30, 2000. The March aims to articulate the concerns of our community and focus our nation's attention on our quest for equality in all aspects of life.

"We expect one million of my gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered sisters and brothers and our enlightened allies to stand on the Mall and call upon our nation to live out the promise of equality under the law," said the Rev. Troy D. Perry, long-time gay activist and founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

Organizers took steps this week to begin incorporation of a non-profit entity to handle planning, production and financial arrangements. Efforts are underway to make sure this is a democratic process where all segments of our community are represented.

"The Millennium March promises to continue its bold commitment to all people of color. I am hearing from Native Americans, Asians, African Americans, Latinos and Pacific Islanders who are ecstatic about participating," said Martin Ornelas-Quintero, executive director of the Latino Latina/o, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organization.

Organizers also expressed their support today for the "Equality Begins at Home" actions on all 50 state capitals set for 1999.

"The Equality Begins at Home" actions enjoy the full and enthusiastic support of the organizers of the Millennium March," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "It's imperative that we focus our energies as a movement at both the state and federal level. These two events will complement each other as together we build the momentum to achieve equality in the next century."

"I am glad to see both of these events moving towards a more collaborative process," said Jubi Headley, executive director of the National Black

Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum. "This is a positive sign of progress."

"Our greatest hope as a movement lies in our commitment to work together for social change. Our passion for justice and our pledge to lift up every voice has the potential to transform town halls, state houses, and our nation's capitol," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"I remain hopeful that the "Equality Begins at Home" actions and the Millennium March will help build our grassroots movement at the state, local and national level," said Dianne Hard-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas and co-chair of the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Organizations. "I believe that working together these actions can strengthen the state and federal organizations that fight daily to end discrimination.

Paula Ettelbrick, legislative director of the Empire State Pride Agenda and the other co-chair of the Federation added, "The Equality Begins At Home actions will fortify our strength at the statewide level and set the stage for the millennium march event in Washington in 2000."

For further information regarding accommodations, travel agents and groups please call the March on Washington, (818) 891-1748 or E-mail MMOW2000@aol.com.

# FEDERATION OF STATEWIDE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

## PRESS RELEASE

### FEDERATION ANNOUNCES "EQUALITY BEGINS AT HOME" A WEEK OF ACTION IN STATE CAPITOLS ACROSS AMERICA

April 30, 1998

The Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Political Organizations will sponsor a historic, coordinated week of actions focused on state government and statewide organizing. After many national and statewide discussions and after conducting a state-by-state assessment of its members, the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Political Organizations has decided it is time to focus energy on our home states. Under the theme "Equality Begins at Home," each state is called upon to plan an activity—a march, rally, lobby day, press conference, or any other visibility campaign—in their state capital during the week of March 21-27, 1999.

"Equality Begins at Home" will provide an opportunity to focus the national spotlight on the organizing

challenges and legislative battles faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in state houses across the nation. The goal is to build statewide organizing capability across the nation and promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equal rights in every state.

"The 'Equality Begins at Home' actions enable us to focus our energy on organizing and educating at the state level. Clearly, more and more battles are fought in the states. With anti-gay initiatives and referendums from Colorado to Maine, and the right wing organizing against our families; we must build a stronger grassroots movement in every state," explained Paula Ettelbrick, Co-Chair of the Federation and Legislative Director of New York's Empire State Pride Agenda.

"The 'Equality Begins at Home' actions give us a tremendous opportunity to strengthen our efforts in the states and create a more powerful network across our country," stated Dianne Hardy-Garcia, Co-Chair of the Federation and Executive Director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. "More states than ever before

are facing anti-gay measures and/or are fighting for pro-gay civil rights protections. Nearly every state has faced a bill banning the recognition of same-sex marriages in the last two years. Over thirty states have groups actively working on pro-gay pieces of legislation."

The "Equality Begins at Home" actions will be organized by each of the existing 36 political organizations active in the Federation. Each state will design an action that best fits with their state and their political goals. Each state will develop a plan for integrating local groups and our allies into the action.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force will help to organize the states that do not have existing statewide political groups. The "Equality Begins at Home" actions have been given office space in the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force office.

Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said "The political center of gravity is in the states. 'Equality Begins at Home' will allow organizers to focus their energy on building the movement in all fifty

continued on page 47

# Barbara Smith

## The Fight is for Social, Political and Economic Justice

*This open letter to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered movement was written during the first week of May, 1998. It was initially circulated via email all over the country. Within days of its appearance I received requests to reprint it in The Washington Blade, Sojourner: The Women's Forum, and Gay Community News. I also received dozens of emails in response, almost all of them positive.*

*In an article profiling Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, in the April, 1998 issue of Out magazine ("Capital Gains," No. 53, April, 1998), reporter J. Jennings Moss describes a joking exchange in which Birch assesses her role in the GLBT movement. Moss, however, takes her statement more seriously. He writes:*

"This is what you should write," she [Birch] joshed to a reporter, her big hazel eyes brightening and a smile creasing her fine, angular features. "In the 1990s there had to be a meeting of minds between the raw activist spirit and the communications and marketing techniques that define a new voice for gay America. It came together in the person of Elizabeth Birch."

*It's a presumptuous view but quite genuine.*

*Later in the article Birch states, "Imagine what you would have done if three years ago you woke up and found that someone had handed you the movement . . . I'll bet you would have made most of the same decisions I've made."*

*Thanks to racism and elitism, progressive people of color are barely allowed to share movement leadership, let alone control it. Rest assured, if we did get to decide movement agendas, they would be a lot different from what they are now. Middle of the road and conservative corporate-inspired strategies automatically marginalize huge sectors of the GLBT movement, a movement which thousands of us have collectively built with "raw activist spirit" long before Birch imagined that it had been "handed" to her on a silver platter.*

*It is no coincidence that the first protests about the Millennium actions have been led by Black lesbian feminists Mandy Carter and Nadine Smith and by a Black organization, the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum. As of this writing, town meetings are being held in various cities to discuss the Millennium organizers' blatant disregard for a democratic and inclusive process. Progressive and radical grassroots activists are also utilizing this great opportunity to develop meaningful and innovative political alternatives to the elitist and reactionary corporate monster that the mainstream lesbian and gay movement has become.*

I want to share my criticisms of the proposed Millennium March on Washington and of the march planners' process of excluding grassroots participation of people of color and other constituencies. It is clear to me at this point in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement's history that we need to prioritize doing organizing where we live. The proposal to carry out co-ordinated simultaneous actions in the fifty state capitals is a much more useful and strategic plan and one that I thoroughly support.

Another march on Washington organized by conservative and moderate white forces that have the single-issue agenda of petitioning the establishment to extend a few gay rights, will do little to address the pressing needs of GLBT people of color. We don't simply need gay rights. We need social, political, and economic justice which means at the very least that we need to work with those who have been and continue to be actively committed to eradicating racism, sexism, and class oppression as well as homophobia.

Elizabeth Birch, executive director, of the Human Rights Campaign, is quoted in the April 17th issue of the *Washington Blade* as stating: "we have not always done our best. We have not always been a good neighbor. But this year, you will see us at the Black Lesbian and Gay Pride weekend and at other major events." Being "a good neighbor" and showing up at Black

photo: Andrew Kaplan



Barbara Smith

events is besides the point. What is to the point is the articulation of a serious, anti-racist activist platform that would lay out specific strategic actions for challenging racism both in the society as a whole and within the white GLBT movement. With such a platform HRC would have been one of the first voices we heard when Haitian immigrant Abner Louima was brutalized by the Brooklyn police last summer or when African immigrant Oumar Dia was murdered by a white skin-head in Denver last November. Birch's statements sound frighteningly similar to those made by Ralph Reed and other members of the pseudo-Christian right wing when numerous Black churches were being burned a couple of years ago. In both cases the leaders of organizations that have previously shown little or no concern about challenging racism have responded to a racial crisis in language that minimizes the magni-

tude of the problem and their culpability in perpetuating it. Both leaders also act as if by simply showing up at places where Blacks are gathered and throwing a little money their way, their organizations' long histories of attacking or ignoring Black struggles will be magically erased. Institutionalized white supremacy is hardly a problem of good and bad "neighbors."

The *Blade* article also cites the e-mail campaign started on March 30th by the Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) which is the other initiator of the Millennium March, to pressure the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to endorse the march without ever seeking the input of the Forum. Perry is quoted in the article as stating, "Ask them to come on board and to endorse the

march. Let them know how much we want and need and—expect—their support." The fact that the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and other people of color were not communicated with from the very beginning when the Millennium March was being conceived, but are now expected to sign on after the fact is the epitome of undemocratic tactics as well as of racism.

I believe this is a crucial time for the Forum and all LGBT people of color to stand firm on principle and not to be bought off. We have an opportunity to demonstrate that we demand consistent respect, that we refuse to be tokenized, and are committed to total liberation for all people, not merely to getting a few rights, that is, crumbs from their table. We have a great opportunity to define our movement, to honor our heritage of struggle, and to establish our place in history. I sincerely hope we will take it.

In solidarity and struggle,  
Barbara Smith  
Albany, New York  
bsmithco@juno.com

**Barbara Smith is an Activist, Editor and Publisher. Founder and Publisher Emeritus of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. Smith is currently researching and writing a history of Black lesbians and gays in the U.S. The Kitchen Table Collective's best sellers include: "This Bridge Called My Back", and "Home Girls." Additionally Smith co-edited, "Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue" and "All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies."**

## h1&gt;march

## Activists Call for an Open Process Regarding Decision-Making on National Events

*This proposal will be brought to the June 9 meeting. The proposal is now circulating to gather more signatures.—ed.*

### Proposal from the Ad Hoc Committee for an Open Process

The Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender people of the USA have organized three national marches on Washington, in 1979, 1987 and in 1993. These marches raised the visibility and advanced the issues of our communities. But the real importance and success of these mobilizations can be measured by the effect they had on our own communities. Grassroots organizing raised issues locally, spawned lasting coalitions and turned many of us into activists. On state and regional levels, new links were forged. Nationally, constituency organizing resulted in the emergence of national organizations and networks. The marches on Washington have been unique organizing tools that helped build a larger, stronger and more unified movement.

Each march was very different as were the times during which they were organized. However, each one was run democratically with mass, grassroots involvement, and each followed a similar organizing scenario. A committee (which dissolved after its work was done) organized a national meeting to which representatives of all lesbian and gay (and later expanded to include bisexual and transgendered) organizations—local, state and regional as well as national—were welcomed. Organizational representatives voted, but otherwise, all in attendance were invited to participate in these open meetings. Here, the primary decision whether to have the event was made first, followed by deliberations on the name of the event, the politics, structure, leadership, and the organizing strategy. Then, throughout the country, open, democratically run meetings selected delegates, with mandates to include women and people of color, to a national steering committee, the highest decision-making body. Constituencies were also represented in the national steering committee and every national organization in our community was invited to join.

Many of these meetings were at times contentious and chaotic. But in the end the decisions were accepted because the process was fair and inclusive. People from all over the country were motivated to commit their time, energy, and resources to build the marches because they realized that they were both heard and represented. And finally, when the big day arrived, we reveled

in and were empowered by our accomplishment. The marches on Washington strengthened our movement largely because they were democratically run grassroots efforts on a massive scale. They have become an essential part of our proud history and a model to other movements for social change.

Now, as a fourth march on Washington is being proposed, we must summon the legacy of the previous three—for the process by which this discussion proceeds will define not only the nature of any event that may follow, but more importantly, that of the LGBT movement itself.

Therefore, we, the Ad Hoc Committee for an Open Process, propose:

- 1 that the June meeting issue a call for an organizing and strategy conference to include discussion and a decision on the proposed march on Washington and other proposals brought forth, with nothing about the proposed march on Washington presented as a *fait accompli*;
- 2 that all LGBT organizations be invited to send two voting representatives to the meeting;
- 3 that attendance and participation (except for voting) be open to all.

We are calling for an open process to engage our movement in a serious, national discussion on

whether or not we want to go to Washington—what's the purpose, when do we want to go, what would we be calling for, and how do we insure the maximum, most diverse participation in any planning process?

#### **SIGNED (AS OF 6/3/98):**

##### **Steve Ault**

**Tommi Avicollì Mecca**  
Columnist, *S.F. Frontline*

##### **Leslie Cagan**

coordinator, NYC, 1987  
March on Washington

##### **Mandy Carter**

Field Program Consultant  
National Black Lesbian &  
Gay Leadership Forum;  
1987 MOW State  
Coordinator, NC; 1993  
MOW National Steering  
Committee; Coordinator,  
People of Color  
Lobby Days

##### **Melanie Clemans**

Long Island's Campus  
Leadership Network  
(CLN) (network of GLBT  
campus groups based  
in LI, NY); OUT IN LI  
(a 20-something plus  
social and issues group)

##### **Alana Samuels**

OUT IN LI; Long Island's  
Campus Leadership  
Network (CLN)

##### **Marla Erlén**

Bromfield St. Educational  
Foundation; *Gay  
Community News*;  
Boston Organizer,  
1987 MOW

##### **Jaime Grant**

Washington, D.C.

##### **Eileen Hansen**

##### **Billy Hileman**

Co-Chair, 1993 MOW

##### **Sue Hyde**

Cambridge, MA

##### **John O'Brien**

Stonewall Veteran

##### **Diana Onley-Campbell**

Washington, D.C.

##### **Dennis Poplin**

San Antonio Lesbian &  
Gay Media Project,  
San Antonio, Texas

##### **Barbara Smith**

Black feminist writer and  
activist, member of the  
Feminist Action Network  
of Albany, NY. One of  
the eight major speakers  
at the 1987 MOW

##### **Nadine Smith**

Co-Chair, 1993 MOW,  
Executive Director of  
Human Rights Task Force

##### **Howard Wallace**

National Steering  
Committee,  
Pride at Work

##### **Christine Williams**

National Queer  
Student Coalition,  
UNC-Chapel Hill

##### **Paul Harris**

Playwright and  
syndicated columnist

##### **David Hencke**

Ohio, AIDS/HIV law  
activist

##### **Robin White**

Independent Public  
Radio Producer  
San Francisco

##### **Peggy Barrett**

Cambridge, MA

##### **Paul Harris**

Playwright and  
syndicated columnist

##### **Tanya Domi**

Activist to Lift  
the Military Ban  
International Advocate  
for Human Rights

##### **Janice Thom**

NY

##### **Catherine McKinley**

New York, NY

##### **Earle@juno.com**

##### **Sheilah R. Sable**

Holding Our Own: A  
Fund for Woman  
Board of Directors  
Albany, NY

##### **Kenneth Sherrill**

New York

##### **Dragonsani Renteria**

Deaf Queer Resource  
Center

##### **Jodi Weinhofer**

Key West, FL

##### **Jesse Heiwa/Queer**

##### **for Racial &**

##### **Economic Justice**

An alliance of Queer  
People Of Color,  
Working-class Queers  
and Queer Progressives  
(the basis for this nation-  
al network is the QFREJ  
Pledge: Support repro-  
ductive freedom & sexu-  
al self-determination,  
Support universal health  
care & a living wage,  
Support affirmative  
action & immigrant  
rights, Oppose police  
brutality & military  
intervention)  
hapanes@juno.com or  
c/o Boxholder,  
GPO Box 7045, NY,  
NY10116-7045 USA

##### **Natalie Davis**

columnist,  
*Baltimore Alternative*

##### **Todd Martinez-Padilla**

##### **Simmons**

Co-Chairman, Human  
Rights Task Force of  
Florida; Chairman,  
Committee on Issues of  
Sexual Orientation,  
University of South  
Florida

##### **Fred Ulmer**

Field Manager, Log  
Cabin Club of Florida -  
statewide chapter of the  
Log Cabin Republicans

##### **Jason Heffner**

New York

##### **Flora L. Piterak**

1994 Intl. March  
(Stonewall)

##### **Harry Hay**

for Harry Hay and  
John Burnside

##### **Radical Faerie**

##### **Political Network**

##### **Warren J. Blumenfeld**

Editor,

##### **Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity**

Northampton,  
Massachusetts

**If you would like to add  
your name to the fol-  
lowing statement,  
please send your con-  
tact information to  
OpenProces@aol.com.  
Thank you.**

# Dennis Poplin

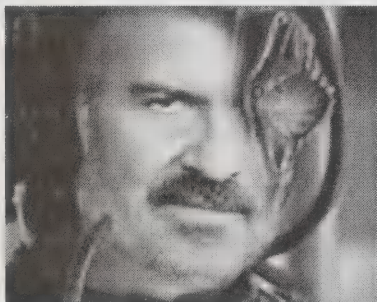


# Millennium Panic!

It seems that everyone has succumbed to the Christian numerology that we call the Millennium. Even if we don't want to—the cultural imperative of 2000 years along with the once-in-a hundred-lifetimes marketing opportunity is more than we can withstand. Resistance is futile.

Other cultures have Millennium myths too. The American version, however, is a suicide cocktail of faith, politics, violent destruction of evil doers and the birth of a golden age. The end of history, the fall of Babylon, and the creation of the New Jerusalem.

The Human Rights Campaign, along with the Metropolitan Community Churches has decided to jump on this horse and ride it to queer world domination. And I don't mean the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. I know I make too many TV references but I really think that HRC/MCC are Borg. They absorb your culture and turn you into a robot member of the collective.



The power, race and class politics of this event's birth, and the wrestling with the state organizations over their plans for State Capitols' marches in 1999 was so obvious and troubling that it set off an immediate flurry of phone calls, letters and press releases.

But I've been thinking that this supposedly more democratic inclusive state action is no different than the national one. No local folks were involved in it at all. At least in Texas. Only leaders of state level organizations decided that we were supposed to support this. What makes it better than the Millennium Corporation? Its the old "issue a press release and they will come" type of organizing. And the funny thing is—we will!

## What's A Rally For?

Why go to these things? Not politics, not to send a message, certainly not to listen to speeches... it's to be around other queer people, to take over public space, to

look at cute boys and girls and possibly to sleep with them. That's what the March On Washington '93 was about. Gay Day at Disney World is just as political. And this year with Operation Rescue going to Orlando—it just might be even more so.

I went to the 1993 Million Queer March. It was a great event. Even though I didn't think the PFLAG contingent would ever end, and lying down in front of the White House with ACT UP was a tearful act of nostalgia. Talk about the end of history.

But, let's face it. The rally was the lowpoint of the entire weekend. The speeches—most were instantly forgettable. The flags and patriotism—comical and unconvincing. There were no power lunches for me. No strategy sessions. I didn't even network. Most everyone I know or talked to did the same thing that I did. We stayed in the streets. That's what made it an event that people remember.

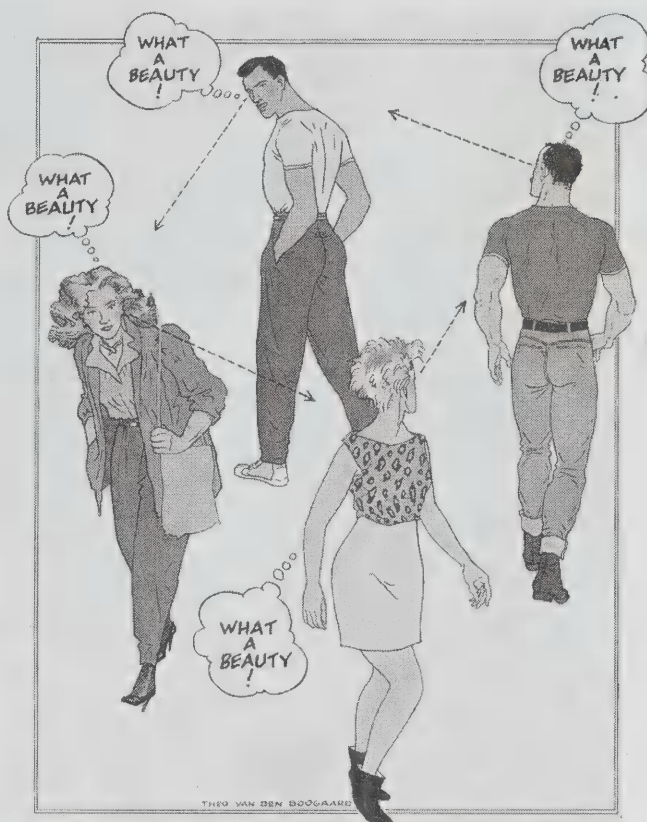
We went to be together. To see each other in all our beauty. From Big Dykes Without Shirts (Scandalous!) to the Nelliest of Queens Dressed! To! Filth! Honey! We did not hide and we would not be ignored. So if this Millennium thing happens—be ready, HRC. There is nothing you can do.

And what is the purpose of this Millennium March, or this rally or whatever it's supposed to be? While the fall of Babylon may not seem like such a bad idea, it isn't what Borg has in mind. According to Elizabeth Birch, the Millennium March works as a way to build membership lists and raise money. Wow, make a buck on the end times. Oh yeah, and something about equality.

### And the Band Played On

After watching the CSPAN cablecast of the 1996 HRC Convention, I have a pretty good idea of the vision of HRC/MCC. HRC had completely and wholeheartedly reproduced a ridiculous relic of 19th century electoral politics. In a hotel banquet room, an appropriately dressed, pumped for TV crowd waved printed signs and cheered one bland 3-minute speechmaker after another. An invisible game show announcer introduced each speaker. Political action as written by Ionesco.

It was hucksters selling a phony product—a gay



Why go to these things? Not politics, not to send a message, certainly not to listen to speeches... it's to be around other queer people, to take over public space, to look at cute boys and girls and possibly to sleep with them.

infomercial hawking acceptance of a bankrupt political system. A seemingly sincere but failed imitation of the ultimate plastic format—the national party convention. Not to mention a complete lack of the much-publicized creativity that all queers are supposed to have.

This is what we have to look forward to if the Millennium March/rally/whatever happens as planned: a straight-acting, slicked-back, coat and tie, men's chorale version of American Queerness. And for what? To convince straight people that their fears are unfounded? Or to tell lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender folks who we ought to be?

# Dennis Poplin



This is what we have to look forward to if the Millennium March/rally/whatever happens as planned: a straight-acting, slicked-back, coat and tie, men's chorale version of American Queerness. And for what?

## Telling Tales . . .

Like previous millennial times, we have our own doomsday prophets. We also have folks behaving in ways that these prophets see as the hysterical acting out of the final days—namely, barebackers, sex advocates and resisters of enforced morality. By the way—don't tell Signorille or Rotello, but the bareback list will be busy filling DC full of raw sex parties during Millennium March weekend. So much for gay respectability.

I believe that we can create an event that is more press worthy and more constructive. It doesn't have to happen in place of the March/rally/whatever. Maybe it should happen before. We should set aside a day for all queer people in the country—what the hell, the world—to meet where they live and discuss the future. Where

are we headed? Where do we want to be? What does it mean to be queer now? No dogma, no speeches, no leaders. Just questions. Not a 50 state event—a 5000 city and town event.

Let's meet in our neighborhoods, in living rooms, across kitchen tables, in the back rooms of restaurants and coffeehouses. Small groups of friends, families and strangers talking about difficult questions of our lives and what that means for the next year—or the next millennium if it must.

Leaders won't be telling us what to think and what our agenda is. We will create it for ourselves. We can stop giving our power to people in Washington DC or state capitols and place it back in our own hands, homes and cities. No dogma, no leaders, just questions about our past and the future. Let's spend some time to consider our queerness—or lack thereof.

Federation Press Release continued from page 39



**Under the theme "Equality Begins at Home," each state is called upon to plan an activity—a march, rally, lobby day, press conference, or any other visibility campaign—in their state capital**

47

states. At this critical time in our movement, NGLTF is fully committed to the Federation and the state actions. We urge our colleague organizations to join with us in supporting this important political work."

Several national and local groups have joined in supporting the "Equality Begins at Home" actions by helping with resources, fundraising, publicity, organizing, promotion and expertise. There will also be a powerful effort to make sure that both the "Equality Begins at Home" actions and the Millennium March complement each other and share resources.

"The 'Equality Begins at Home' actions enjoy the full and enthusi-

astic support of the organizers of the Millennium March," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "Its imperative that we focus our energies as a movement at both the state and federal level. These two events will complement each other as together we build the momentum to achieve equality in the next century."

"Each state capitol must hear voices of every color that make up the LGBT community. LLEGO will make sure that Latina/os are active in this event and looks forward to making a forceful manifestation of unity and inclusiveness. Our movement will be raised to a new level with the success of "Equality

Begins at Home," said Martin Ornelas-Quintero, Executive Director of LLEGO, The National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization.

**The Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Political Organizations is a network of statewide LGBT political organizations whose purpose is to facilitate cooperation and communication between groups; establish a clearinghouse for the exchange of information and ideas; assist existing and new groups in addressing their organizational development needs; and provide a structure between statewide political groups and national organizations. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force serves as the coordinator of the Federation.**

# Leslie Cagan

## OutSpoken Concerns

The call for a Millennium March (MMOW) raises such serious issues about the state of the LGBT movement that it is hard to know where to begin. Here I want to focus on the silencing of criticism, the hesitation to disagree, and the inability to honestly and publicly explore our differences.

### But first a few words of background.

HRC and MCC made their announcement in February, having given other national organizations only hours to decide if they would sign on to the press release as a sponsor. This initial undermining of anything approaching a democratic and open process should have been enough, in and of itself, to indicate a serious problem. But in the few months that followed the process went from bad to worse.

Whatever the weaknesses and limitations of the organizing processes of the 1979, 1987 and 1993 marches on Washington, in each instance honest attempts were made at democratic decision-making by the most representative and inclusive structures possible. The initiators of the MMOW haven't made any *public* gestures at devel-

oping an open democratic process. But behind the scenes, they have been forced to make some moves to abate the anger from other executive directors regarding their uncomradely mode of operation.

The invitation-only meetings of 40 people to be held in DC on June 9 and 10 are to focus on both the MMOW and the coordinated state actions for 1999. (Who are they to decide which 40?) Apparently, there was a line drawn by the initiators of the MMOW that no organizers of the previous marches on Washington be included. Purportedly, the purpose of this meeting is to get feedback and input from a broader base of organizers (to "calm the waters," I suspect).

### Whose Got the Power?

While HRC/MCC may view

this meeting as a "concession," the terms of this are completely unacceptable. If you want to call upon our national movement to use their collective resources, energies, and time to build a massive event then does it not make sense to include as many people/groups as possible right from the beginning? If it's our movement, and this event will project our concerns, then shouldn't we—or at least the broadest and most inclusive representation of us—be involved in the process? And I don't mean in a token, sign-on-when-it's-all-figured-out kind of way.

Beyond the process problems, there are also questions about the content. When we go to Washington we should know why. What do we hope to get out of it? How does it help build our movement? What message(s) do we want to be communicating? How does it help strengthen the foundation of our movement—grassroots locally-based organizing and the daily struggles of queer people everywhere?

### Where's the Public Debate?

I am especially horrified by the lack of frank, public discussion. Why is the National Lesbian & Gay Black Leadership Forum the only national organization to organize public meetings for debate as a way to decide whether or not to endorse this event? Are other leaders confronting HRC and MCC for their outrageous betrayal of our history and their willingness to

**MASSACHUSETTS  
STATEWIDE CONFERENCE  
for the LESBIAN and GAY PEOPLE'S  
MARCH ON WASHINGTON, D.C.  
Saturday, May 5, 1979, 9am-5pm  
Arlington Street Church  
Arlington & Boylston Streets in Boston  
Speakers, Discussion, Delegate Election  
MARCH DATE: October 14th, 1979**



**Third World Lesbians and Gay Men are  
an important part of the March on Washington**

— 40% of the National Coordinating Committee is made up of Third World Gay People  
— The National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference will be held in Washington the same weekend as the march, planned and coordinated with the march in mind.  
— The Massachusetts Statewide Conference will include time for the formation of a Third World Caucus, and a speaker from the Third World community will speak at the plenary session in the presence of Third World people in the march.

**Suggested registration fee: \$5. Please pre-register by sending check to:  
"March on Washington", GCN Box 20, 22 Bromfield St., Boston, MA 02108.**

**The 1979 March on Washington: an honest  
attempt at democratic decision-making**

hand down decisions that the rest of us are supposed to take up without question? If they are, how am I, or anyone else for that matter, to know this? If you're not in the loop (which means inside the Beltway or with damned good access into that scene) then it's extremely hard to know what's really happening. And I say this as a nosy New Yorker. What happens to folks in St. Louis or Duluth or Tucson? Why haven't they made sure a broad base of queers knows about it?

For instance, I understand that at a policy round table in Washington, DC this spring there was a limited discussion of the MMOW. Lots of people had questions or disagreements with the idea, but for the most part those concerns were raised in one-on-one exchanges outside the meeting and not squarely placed on the table at the meeting. Why?

### Internal Divides

Part of the problem in generating debate is that in the larger societal context the range of public political discourse runs from a centrist middle (that has moved so far to the right that they sound like the Republicans

of the 1970s) to the ultra rightwing with its hate filled politics and militias. There is precious little space for a progressive voice, let alone a truly radical perspective, in a culture saturated with corporate greed, racism and women-hating. That's the big picture, but what's happening within our community?

If we all agreed about everything then why would we need to have different organizations? In reality, there are major differences and disagreements. Some of us believe our struggle for sexual liberation and an end to discrimination is directly tied to and part of a broader movement for social and economic justice. Other GLBT activists are working for a fuller integration into the structures of this culture. Some of us work on gay issues as part of building strong trade unions while others build gay associations within corporations. Some of us uncritically applaud Disney for their "gay-friendly" employee policies, while others of us also demand that Disney stop running sweat shops in Haiti. And let's not even get into the ideas that Disney films, videos and mass marketed merchandise are promoting!

The most polite questioning of this event that was raised in a March 4 press release from other national organizations was referred to as "a mud fight" by Birch and Perry in their March 5 response. (See documents) Perhaps this type of reaction is something that happens within every oppressed group under the banner of "don't wash your dirty laundry in public". Some may feel that even with all of the advances we have made since Stonewall, we are still so bombarded with stereotypes, hatred, discrimination, abuse and violence that we should not show any splits or fissures within our ranks. There is also, for some, a legacy of petty in-fighting, and sometimes our disagreements have been personalized—we have often been highly critical without being very supportive or helpful. But I don't believe that's what's happening here.

The criticisms, the questions and the disagreements many of us have with the MMOW are concerns that our movement, as a movement, needs to address. I believe in leadership, and one of the most important tasks of leadership is to open up debate and discussion, not close it down.

continued on page 51

# WHAT'S WRONG WITH MILLENNIALIST THINKING?

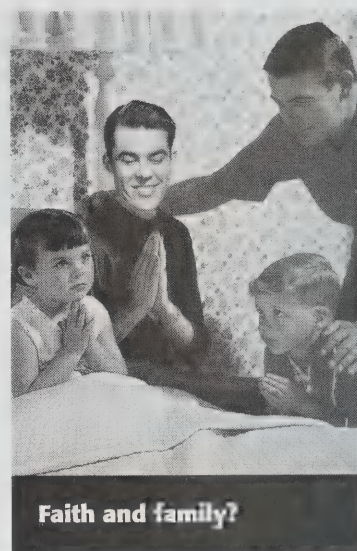
Millennialism has fueled American fear and panic for centuries. In our own time, we see millennialist thinking represented everywhere.

From the death of Princess Diana, to films like *Deep Impact* to programs like *The X-Files*, the temptation to feed our millennial anxieties is all-pervasive. Sadly, for many gay people, millennial panic—and not rigorous political planning—also fuels the desperate delusions of what has been proposed as a utopian community agenda to mark the beginning of the 21st century.

The Human Rights Campaign and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the two co-sponsors of the proposed Millennium March, argue that the event will energize political power by mandating that federal and local governments work more responsibly and collaboratively with their lesbian and gay constituents. But as with all populist actions taken by fringe groups and religious cults, the Millennium March is really about the desire for control in the face of millennial panic, made manifest as the consolidation of power and money by a self-appointed centralized body. In this sense, too few are willing to acknowledge that the same millennial fever that has captured the organizers of the Millennium March draws upon the same panic that inspired the millennial activities at Jonestown and Rancho Santa Fe, and that continues to inspire the stadium reveries of reactionary groups like the Promise Keepers.

## What's Right?

If anything, millennialist thinking is not about the triumph of democratic participation but has been, historically, about replacing democratic principles with the privatization of power and the concentration of authority in fewer and fewer hands. In Paul Johnson's *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, his



Faith and family?

great study of Rochester, New York in the early 19th century, Johnson shows the political and material links between religious revivalism and the evolution of a new class of property owners during what was called the “Second Great Awakening.” Under the shallow veneer of communitarian values lurked the trappings of a middle-class society inventing its own rituals of power—creating spatially-segregated neighborhoods for workers, management, and factory owners, enforcing temperance laws, and, of course, having “lots” of parades celebrating religious and civic devotion. How better to proselytize the masses for the dominant social order?

How different, ultimately, is this early 19th century version of millennialism from the Millennium March's late 20th century call to arms through its twin terrorist strategies of “faith and family,” the banner under which we are all expected to march? And how dif-

ferent, ultimately, are such strategies from those of the Religious Right, especially as they begin to mount alarmingly similar campaigns for their support on the eve of the next millennium?

Perhaps one cannot entirely blame Elizabeth Birch or Rev. Troy Perry for the singularity of their vision. Time and time again, we see how the rhetoric of family values is exploited by the ambitions of seemingly scrupulous politicians and self-appointed community speakers who pander to parental fears and millennial anxieties. In Mayor Rudy Giuliani's "Great Awakening" in the new New York City, for example, the planned shrinkage of social services and public subsidies has paved the way for unlimited corporate growth, even as the stock market sits poised on the brink of multi-billion dollar millennial collapse. In this freest of market economies, where Disney reigns but the city has proposed to destroy the more than 700 community gardens and green spaces for real estate development, businesses and social institutions that do not measure up to community standards often forfeit the "quality of life" imprimatur sought eagerly by whining parents, business improvement districts, and real estate mavens.

At a May 4, 1998 community board meeting, local residents of Manhattan's Upper West Side (once celebrated as the last liberal bastion in the city) tried to prevent board members from approving a liquor license for Bernard Knollinger, the new owner of a lesbian and gay bar. How did local residents try to accomplish this feat? Parents brought a dozen of their own children, all of whom had been coached in the strains of heart-tugging sitcom moralism (one parent even taught her daughter to say, "We are the future") as a means of manipulating the meeting. Luckily, the Board ignored the childish propaganda and recommended Knollinger's bar for a license. But in another city, on another day, he might not have been so lucky.

If community activists engaged in lesbian and gay political battles should have any message permanently tattooed on their foreheads, it should be this: "Beware of millennialist organizations that speak on behalf of family values".

**David Serlin writes and teaches in New York City.**

Leslie Cagan continued from page 49

## Where Are We Going?

Hopefully what is unfolding around the HRC/MCC call is helping us take a closer look at the state of our movement. Maybe it's time to re-think our mission and figure out where we are going. I for one hope we can get back to some of the initial aims of the gay liberation movement: to be strong enough to re-shape the structures and institutions that define our lives, to challenge the ideas and assumptions that limit our possibilities, and to bring our full selves into a common effort with other constituencies struggling for freedom and equality.

The more I think about how all of this has been playing out, the more upset I get. For one thing, as a friend of mine said, "It's the wrong idea, for the wrong reasons, at the wrong time, called by the wrong people." It's also upsetting to see how far our movement is from understanding that open discussion is healthy and productive, how principled disagreement is vital for democracy and for the life of a social movement.

Finally, perhaps what is most frustrating is that many of us have slowly but surely come to realize that we no longer have one GLBT movement. The problem is the progressive queer movement so many of us want to be a part of lacks the creative, dynamic, outspoken leadership we need. We simply can no longer sit by and let HRC, or MCC, or any other organization which is not articulating and fighting for an agenda we agree with, "lead" our movement.

Unity is a critical tool in our fight for social and economic justice. But unity must not be at the expense of democracy. Instead of being afraid of our disagreements we need to face them honestly. Our movement is at a turning point, what you and I and our organizations do today will shape the direction we take for years to come. Nothing less is at stake.

**Leslie Cagan is a long-time organizer. She was the New York Coordinator for the 1987 March on Washington.**

Geeta Patel

Stories for the Millennium:



# Disrupting Time

**Preamble:**

*When I heard that a LGBT march was being organized in the year 2000, and that MCC was one of two initiators, it threw me back into thinking about who I was, and what such a march might mean for me as a participant in a local scene of queer North American politics. I realized that I was terrified of what the march might portend. I also realized that not many people seemed to understand the depth of or the reasons for my terror. Allies were hard for me to find. So I decided to lay out what came up for me as I thought about the march as a way of getting others, to at least for a moment, consider my reservations.*

**Scene One:**

My very Punjabi, comfortably substantial mother and aunt, my lanky, blond North American girlfriend, and I, hybrid, sort of mixed Indian-American arrive at the circles of cottages near the shore of Puri, on the east coast of India. We are there to perform two rituals—as four tourists who want to imbibe the voluptuously carved, heart red stone Sun temple of Konark, and as three temporarily good Hindus, offering food, flowers and money at the *dham* of Puri, one of the major religious sites in India.

Pouring out of the car near Konark we are immediately thrown into the loud congregations of large blond American families—lots of women and men and dozens of children. My mother and aunt, Indian *yentas*, slip into allocating man and woman to child, but there seem to be too many kids milling around to portion into reasonable families. “Maybe they’re missionaries, maybe they’ve adopted some of the kids,” I say, secure in the assumption that no one can afford quite so many children these days, and who else would be at Puri milling around in such a mass. But I can’t quite understand what all these people are doing here, here in Puri, here at one of the largest temple towns in India, where non-Hindus are only allowed restricted access. Maybe they want to take their kids to the beach, to the Sun temple. But they look too clean cut, hair trimmed carefully into place, too sedate to really enjoy the seductive, sexy eloquence of the Sun temple and its risqué sculptures.

The next morning, as we set off for Puri and the Sun temple, I notice them walking around with books, collecting in rooms that seem to have been set aside for their private use. Outside one of the larger rooms, I see—MCC—the church I associate with gay congregations. What is all this bouncing, proliferating heterosexuality doing under the same acronym? Meanwhile they have spread to the table-tennis table, have taken all the seats in the open foyer, are

not just under foot, but edging all the Indians out with their size, their sound, the way they seem to assume that occupying space is their personal avocation. So, I go up to the desk and ask the two men behind it about them. "It's a missionary group," I am told. I walk up to one of the blond men and say, "Where are you from?" "From all over here, the east, we're missionaries, having a meeting." "Are you the same MCC, Metropolitan Community Church, that has branches all over the US?" "Oh, yeah, we're them, we've been here at these time-share vacation homes since the *new year*. Great place isn't it?"

I am aware that my anxiety, or to put it more clearly my irritation, at dealing with this group resonated with the knowledge born of several unpleasant experiences. White missionaries seemed to be more welcome at hotels in Orissa than three Indian women and an American one. But at the same time, I was profoundly aware of the oddness, the anomalousness of an almost casual invasion of missionaries at the heart of Hindu country. I am neither a supporter of Hinduism, especially in its new political incarnation as the bolstering account for fascist nationalism, nor do I proclaim my religiosity as a place of identity, but the ordinary dismissiveness of this proliferation of Christianity startled me into thinking about the massing of a certain kind of power.

### Scene two:

When I was a child in India, celebrating the New Year, January 1, had always been associated with Britishness. Not everyone could completely have it. My family which belonged to a host of neo-British clubs always celebrated it in a club, dressing up to go out in groups to dance, eat and drink. I can't even quite explain how the whole process of celebration felt. There was something slightly off-kilter about it, something that made me feel like I was close to living a lie any stranger could expose. Shame me with a casual turn, a flick of phrase that I might not recognize. Something about it that lodged in my body as a not quite right kind of experience. Therein lay the embodiment of mimicry, not parody, but mimicry. Parody or camp would have had a certain kind of pleasurable off-kilterness, where exposure was part of its delicious pleasure. New Year, the new year where we dressed up and went out in groups from house to house, eating and drinking, without really thinking about whether we looked right in a gaze we didn't understand, New Year began in the month of *kartik*.

That year, the year we were in Puri, the year had already begun in November of the previous year. Confusing isn't it? That is precisely the way in which more than one organization of time comes together.

My years in the US varied between those where my parents were willing to fill in another calendar for me, and those where we were fighting, so I had no clock given me over the telephone. In the US, I was clocked in two times. I lived by academic time, and so-called secular time. When my parents called I would remember yet another time. But it was hard to live it, because there was no space in which to recognize it, without feeling off-kilter (and not parodic) about it. The new year that had been the most simply situated in my body as recognized comfort had turned against itself in this place in my life. But I haven't begun to completely "do" this other new year. Each time it comes around, all I want to do is to mark it by not celebrating.

For years I looked for an Indian calendar, wandering from store to store lost in my search for a different time keeper. I never found one then, though these calendars are now available. I wanted to wrest my time keeping away from my parents. From the erraticness of this year I might remember, or time may slip by without my noticing.

I have now grown more accustomed to a Christian calendar telling my days. And my labor is organized by an academic calendar.

### Scene three:

This time around, at the turn of the millennium, when the calendar hits 2000, we have to be prepared they tell us. When all the electronic equipment that runs my life runs down to "00," I expect to have accounts closed, my house in arrears, my computer bleeping out hours of work stored in files, my life in temporal shambles. Fears that have run

continued on page 56

**Kerry Lobel**

# A March, *A Movement,* **A Moment**

Four months after the Human Rights Campaign and the Universal Federation of Metropolitan Community Churches called for a Millennium March on Washington for Equal Rights, the then-march now rally has sparked lively public debate and intense private discussion of issues much wider than just the march itself. It has called into question the very core issue of who controls the agenda for the future of our movement.

I believe that no one organization can control an entire movement's agenda. The road to our freedom is a long one and the process is as important as the result. A national movement is fueled by the collective energy and spirit found in towns and cities across America. It is there that our futures lie.

As I have expressed repeatedly since the beginning of my tenure with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, if the political center of gravity ever resided in Washington, it has surely shifted to the states. Our movement is growing and more people than ever are involved in their communities. With this growth come many challenges. Today we find ourselves at the brink of

making decisions that will forever affect our futures. At NGLTF, we believe that our communities must be visible in every state capital in America.

## **Equality Begins At Home**

As the coordinator for the Federation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Political Organizations, NGLTF has made the substantial financial commitment to realize the dream of a national political infrastructure at the state level. It has been nearly two years since my friend and colleague Urvashi Vaid first approached us with the idea of NGLTF coordinating 50 simultaneous state marches. The idea has evolved and reshaped itself into a plan from the Federation calling for a week of political action in every state during March 1999.

Called Equality Begins At Home, the state actions reflect the decentralized power structure in our movement and will involve everyone in their own home towns. NGLTF has made a significant pledge of staff time, material resources and cold, hard cash to the Equality Begins At Home actions. Our role will be one of national coordination.

Considering that we support the state actions as a primary programmatic goal for the next year, what will be our relationship to the March on Washington? What does a year 2000 national rally mean to individuals, our communities, and to NGLTF?

photo: Ellen Shub



**1987 March on Washington, Civil Disobedience at the Supreme Court**

### National Rites of Passage

It is abundantly clear that the three previous national marches have had a profoundly personal impact for the individual gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people who attended. They served as national rites of passage, collectively gathering millions of people for moments of solidarity and strength. Ironically, the stories lost in the telling of the march tales are those of the marches' political themes: breaking the chains of oppression in 1979, coming out for freedom in 1987 or demands concerning universal healthcare and bilingual education in 1993.

Equally clear is the impact the marches have had on local organizations. Local groups can be both taxed and energized by their work on a national mobilization. Local organizing committees have shouldered a large share of the mass

movement to DC. The work is carried back home after the event where energized individuals seek to plug into local activities.

National groups, too, carry a burden of the organizing for national actions. In addition to the action itself, attendees go home with a different sense of themselves and of this movement after their inspirational moment on the Mall. NGLTF was so overwhelmed with requests for information and assistance after the 1987 that we launched our annual Creating Change Conference to meet the needs for information sharing and resource development by state and local organizers.

NGLTF endorsed all three previous marches and was significantly involved with organizing the 1987 and 1991 marches. In 1998, we find ourselves in the peculiar position of having made a hasty

endorsement, withdrawn it, and then engaged in countless discussions about the national rally. Our colleagues called us into the march process at the eleventh hour and have organized letter writing campaigns in an effort to move us to endorse the march.

The concerns raised first by NGLTF and joined by many of our colleagues at the state and national levels were instrumental in

drawing attention to the clumsy and exclusionary process that yielded the first march announcement. Our public statements have enumerated our concerns about the process, content, and timing of the march. And we have participated in conference calls and meetings with the ultimate goal being to bring the discussions to a larger table.

### Open Up the Process

Many of us have deep concerns. The landscape of our movement has significantly changed since 1991. Nearly 40 states have lobbying organizations or networks. There are anti-violence projects in every major community and literally hundreds of community centers exist throughout the country. Religious organizations, social groups, softball leagues, professional networks, and employee

# Lobel/Patel

Kerry Lobel continued from page 55

groups have all blossomed and grown in the past decade. There has been a systematic failure to grasp the significance of speaking for an entire movement without drawing that movement into the discussion.

March organizers have promised a more open planning process and a willingness to allow control to be decentralized. Will the planning process ultimately be inclusive and respectful of every member of our communities? Will the event itself lift and celebrate every voice? Some of my colleagues believe that the style in which the initial call was made answers those questions with a resounding “no.”

As NGLTF’s executive director, that can’t and won’t be my answer. It is our job to bring our 25 years of organizing for social change to the March discussion. If we walk away from the process as it currently stands and dismiss it as irreparable, NGLTF abandons our responsibility as a national organization. Our members have charged us to try to make the organizing process an open and democratic one and to try to create an overall progressive message that speaks to the needs of many, not just the desires of a few.

We believe that our process as a community must reflect the world that we want to build. If we want to build a movement that is transformational, we will model honesty, we will model openness and we will take the risks that challenge conventional thinking. We will act with integrity in our personal relationships and in our relationships with our colleagues. We will seek out and lift up every voice, challenged by what we hear but not afraid. Not all of us want to be like everyone else. We make a serious mistake when we create a dress code for civil rights.

The true test of democracy is how it embraces those who look, act, and think differently, not just those who are the same. This is the world we dream of—a more compassionate society. One that values the worth and dignity of all people.

**Kerry Lobel is the Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.**

Geeta Patel continued from page 53

rampant—worlds collapsing, markets crashing, people starving—foretell an apocalypse. The end of the world as we know it is at hand. These are the fears I foretell for myself.

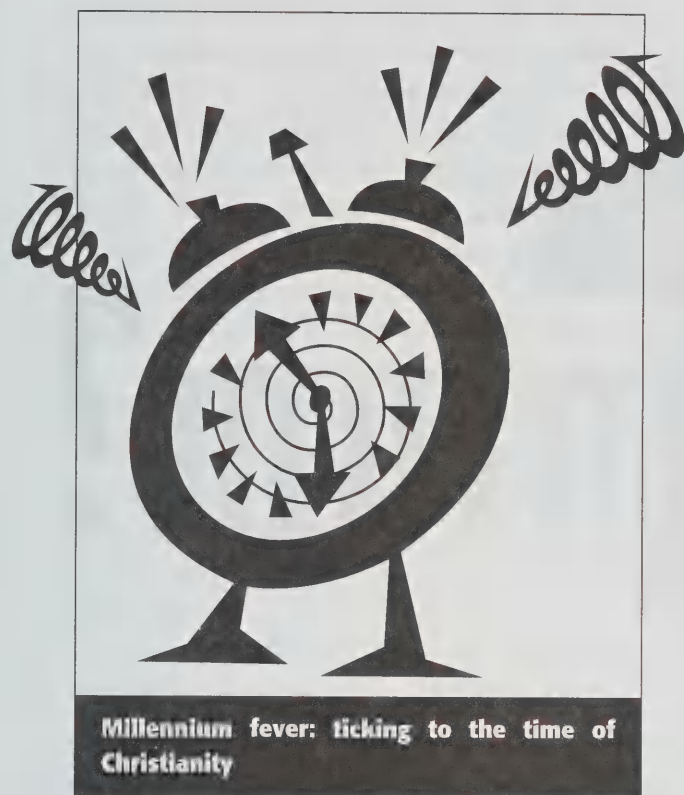
My fears seem so “natural.” After all aren’t they about the natural clock programmed into electronic events? What could be more ordinary than my bank, my computer, the market. But the ticking of a clock that keeps such a seamless secular time is a clock that has ticked the time of Christianity. Now I know that this sounds almost portentous. Sounds almost crazy. I feel myself standing at some odd corner in New York, asking for conversions, watching people turn aside as they acknowledge the off-kilterness of what I am saying.

But I want us to pay attention to time. I want myself to pay attention to how we have come to believe that the time we live in, the timing of mechanical objects, the time of technology is merely secular or even just like timed “natural” events—hurricanes, storms or tornadoes. And I want to pay attention to this at this precise time, because as a lesbian, a newly “naturalized” American-Indian lesbian, I want to give some thought to the march being organized at the turn of the millennium by the MCC.

## Questioning Scenes:

I have wondered why I might be struggling with this march. I’ve long believed in the importance of bringing Christianity into conversation with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender issues. As a teacher I help many of my students struggle with their religion and their sexuality. The MCC despite its missionary incarnation in India has been a church that has given home and succor to many queer folk.

But I am not a Christian. I don’t want to be converted. Though I’d like to offer my support to a march whose very timing is organized around a Christian calendar, that march is not mine. I am happy to work in coalitions, but I would like to be in one that actually acknowledges my identity, and that of a huge segment of the world’s population—working class, non-



Christian, their identity, their belief clock living a different time.

I went back to my English dictionary of choice for a moment, because I did not have my Bible handy. Yes I have a Bible. Actually I have several. I went to missionary schools with compulsory Bible study, and thought of Easter as more important than Christmas.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines both apocalyptic and millennial as Christian terms. Apocalypse is "any vision or prophecy especially of violent or climactic events comparable with those foretold in the book Revelation of Saint John." Millennium is "a period of one thousand years," or "the period of one thousand years during which Christ will reign in person on earth" (according to one interpretation of Rev. 20:1-5), "a period of peace, happiness, prosperity and ideal government."

Millennialism brings together good government, good life, good will. It, along with its sister utopianism, and its other, the apocalyptic vision, is a missionary

position. Its valences imbue this turn of the clock. Its valences also imbue the politics of progressive movements in the US regardless of their constituencies, whether those constituencies are of color, mixed class, mixed race, mixed gender. The languages and prophetic reconfigurations of self, coming out, coming together, revelation, redemption, that are called forth in such movements belong to a common era.

I am not making a call to let movements go. Nor am I arguing against the necessity of progressive movements, whatever the positions coded into their political imperatives. I am just making a little call, albeit an anxious one, that one pay attention to double time. In this case, the time of a queer march, organized around Christianity, that precisely because it refuses an awareness of its assumptions, leaves lots of folks like me marching in coalition, but not for ourselves. I want to pay attention to the massing of power, power whose organization into a single time demands that the only way one can be queer is by acceding to it.

I want to pay attention to time, so simply there for so many. But for others, is charged with the valence of colonial violence, missionary conversion, modernity that slips into Christianity.

It is important to pay attention, here and now, to a kind of radical pluralism many activists have called out. Where Hindus and Buddhists, agnostics and atheists, Jews, orthodox and reformed, Shias and Sunnis, are not merely stirred into a soupcon of queerness to spice it up slightly. Where the very organization of a movement shifts to account for some of those casual asides that are ordinary for some and entirely off-kilter for others. I want us to think twice about the casualness of taking temporal space for granted. I want us to rethink the march at the turn of the modern, Christian millennium.

**Geeta Patel is an Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at Wellesley College. Her most recent publications include "Miraji: Myth and Metaphor in 'Incomplete Self Portrait,'" *Annual of Urdu Studies* 10 (1995), and "Home, Homo, Hybrid: Translating Gender" in *College Literature* 24.1 (1997). She is co-editor (with Kevin Kopelson) of *The InQueery Issue: GLQ* 2.4 (1996). Her forthcoming book from Stanford University Press, a queer reading of Miraji is titled, *Miraji: Poetry in Motion***

# Whose Millennium?

58

While I share the concerns others have expressed about the proposed march's process and agenda, my focus here is on its relentlessly christian\* emphasis. I am disturbed by the inevitable exclusion from this projected major movement activity of non-Christians (me, for example), and about the ways in which the "march" will strengthen christian hegemony in this country. That there is no less cumbersome, more conversational term than christian hegemony underscores how little we talk about it; how little we see it. Yet it is in our interest as queers to make christian hegemony visible, since it is almost always invoked against us. (I constantly suggest the term christianism but it has not yet caught on. I am hopeful. Sexism once sounded awkward and bizarre too.)

The thing is, not being christian gives you a different take on the millennium. This country is so steeped in christian discourse hardly anyone notices that the millennium is a profoundly christian—and for non-Christians, profoundly unnerving—concept. The big-deal date is, after all, measured from the birth of Jesus. When the digits flip to 2000 and all the computers freak out, the Jewish calendar, for example, will read an unproblematic 5760.

## Cashing In?

Okay, the BC/AD calendar (or its pretend-secular clone BCE/CE) is used all over the world. What bothers me is the hype. At a moment characterized by capitalist triumphalism, it's weird and depressing to see us queers invoking the same imagery, the same tools, the same "ops" as our opponents. Just when we need integrity, courage, and vision, we get a marketing strategy. Millennium? Let's cash in!

I can hear my practical sisters and brothers: "Why not? We need to use these tools."

## Shoring Up Christianity

Here's why not. Pivotal christian moments—e.g., Easter, the last millennium—seem to remind some Christians to bond zealously against all the heathen, pagan, godless folk. Violence against non-Christians and heretics increases at such moments, including the historical association between Easter and pogroms. There is some reason to expect an upsurge in fundamentalist christian lunacy as the year 2000 approaches.

Let me state a few axioms. Religious fundamentalism is bad for gays and for women: all religious fundamentalism. In the US, the empowered fundamentalism is christian and it is growing. Christian fundamentalism explicit-

\* I have chosen to only capitalize christian when it is a noun.

ly targets gays and lesbians as perverse, demonic, hell-bent, disgusting, undeserving of minimal legal protection; indeed, it condemns all non-Christians to hellfire. MCC's Troy Perry envisions the march, in part, as an opportunity to transmit to so many the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm sure he sees this as generous, since Christianity offers all of us the opportunity to become Christian; like other evangelists, he fails to notice that not all of us wish to. Around this projected "march," the combination of Christian imagery and the major sponsorship by MCC—with no parallel sponsorship by other faith communities—reinforces Christianity: the power of Christians to define morality; the idea that faith, morality and goodness are Christian. Shouldn't queers, even Christian queers, be less eager to shore up this equation?

Certainly non-Christian queers and straights will read the millennium-church combination as exclusionary, or at least clueless. There are, for example, a number of queer and politically progressive shuls (synagogues), there is an international organization of gay and lesbian Jews, and there are many out rabbis. Undoubtedly there are other faith groupings of queers. There are also potential allies among non-Christian straights, including secular groups with many or mostly non-Christian members, groups like Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, and many others. Virtually unanimous Jewish opposition to homophobic ballot measures in Oregon and Washington, for example, should remind us of the possibility of alliance with other "others."

I don't know if sponsorship from any of these groups was solicited, or even imagined. Yet I believe that the response of thoughtful non-Christians to this millennial extravaganza would be like mine, queasy.

### **"Strengthening Secularism"**

It's not that complicated. Non-Christians have a vested interest in strengthening secularism, in defending against the increasing encroachment of Christianity into formerly secular spheres.

So do radicals. So do queers. Even Christian queers.



It's no accident that "commiejewniggerlovingqueer" was the epithet hurled at all white progressives during the McCarthy period. It's no accident that "under god" was inserted into the pledge of allegiance during this period, or that the two political prisoners executed during that era were the Jewish communists Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

In short: this millennial "march"—marketing hype or uncritical bid to inscribe Christianity on the face of our movement—strengthens our enemies and alienates our friends. To invoke and reinforce Christian power exactly at a time when we need to challenge it smacks of pre-millennial lunacy.

**Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz is a writer, teacher, and activist. She is the author of *The Issue Is Power: Essays On Women, Jews, Violence and Resistance* and *My Jewish Faith and Other Stories*. She has just completed a new novel. She teaches at Brooklyn College and is a long-time teacher of women's studies.**

# pen pals

The Gay and Lesbian Prisoner Project, a program of the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, works to support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender prisoners by providing them with information, referrals and support. Many are incarcerated simply for who they are or whom they love. Others face harassment and discrimination. The prisoners listed below are seeking pen pals who will write to them. While we try to publish as many ads as possible in Gay Community News, the number of ads we receive far exceeds the space we are provided. Offer your support, learn about prison life and make a new friend by writing to one of the people listed below. Become involved with the Prisoner Project by volunteering. Please call (617) 262-6969. [NOTE: Ad corresponds to prisoner listed below the ad]

African-Amer, 49 y.o., 6'2", 230. No hang ups about race, religion, age, or lifestyle. Anyone kind enough to write, I will write back.

**Irvin Timley #24712**

EDCF

PO Box 311

El Korado, KS 67042 9/97

I am considering doing an interpretation of the bible, demonstrating meticulously that "Jesus" was undeniably gay, and I'd like to talk to some high-class folks with alternative lifestyles to determine if there is a need for this "end time revelation" or not. This work would be highly controversial, of course, but I think it will contain such a mountain of compelling evidence, that, eventually, it will completely replace "orthodox" christianity and their mistaken, shallow interpretations. I appreciate your help, and would like to hear your comments.

**David Allen Derr**

#280797 TDCJ-ID

Huntsville, TX 77340 9/97

58 y.o. would like to met someone nice. Looking for older gay man or straight woman for friendship or more (!?) Will answer all letters, photos. No inmates.

**Karl Deago 90T4306**

Pouch No. 1

Woodbourne, NY 12788 9/97

Sexy, 22yo, GWM, HIV-, 5'8", long dyed blond hair, br eyes, 155 lbs. Seeking older father figure for guidance and relationship. Getting out of prison in 18 mths.

**Wesley Kvasnicka #36999**

Ely State Prison

PO Box 1989

Ely, NV 89301 9/97

GWM, 42, 5'9", 210lbs.gray/bl hair. Reading, sports, outdoors, taking long walks with someone I care about. Looking for someone special to share friendship with and possibly more. All answered.

**Francis (Joe) Roell #6317**

PO Box 41

Michigan City, IN 46361-0041

9/97

Seeking? 21 yo Bi male. 6'1", 175, nice body physique w/med. Build, 7½" = fun. Looking for fun loving supporter who will help me escape the burdens of this state upon release. Getting GED, need help to get college ed/\$ help for tuition and books. Treat for those who write!

**Patrick R. Lytle #717571**

Wash. Corr. Ctr.

PO Box 900 IMU

Shelton, WA 98584 10/97

20 y.o. BIWM, 5'11", 155 lbs, slim, extremely cute & boyish! I'm friendly, honest and very real w/my friends. I've never had gay sex, but the desire is definitely there! I'd like to find a GM who will be patient w/me and teach me how to please another man! I look 16!

**Kenny Legrande #233704**

Craigsville, VA

10/97

I'm incarcerated in a Calif. State Prison, and am looking for a male gay person to write. Can you please put me in contact with one? I'm 5'8", bw eyes, brown hair, medium build. I'm Italian and 40 y.o.

**Michael Colombo E.14630**

P.V.S.P. D3 119

PO Box 8504

Coalinga, CA 93210 10/97

Need someone to write to besides mom, dad, and aunt mae. I'm paroling to LA area next yr. Race and age unimportant (as long as over 18).

**Tim Goebel**

PO Box 9

Avenal, CA 93204 10/97

23 y.o. Male in search of a soul mate. I don't wish to correspond with anyone locked up (please). Serious replies only. Open-minded, caring, consistent, sweet to the taste. 5'11", 212 lbs. Slim waist, slight build, very clean, athletic and romantic w/baby brown eyes. Race unimportant. Artist/musician

**Terrence T. Dailey #709586**

Rt. 2 Box 4400

Gatesville, TX 76597 10/97

I'm a 23 y.o Italian/Puerto Rican male, 5'9", 175 lbs br eyes, bl hair. Love reading, outdoors, cooking, movies, and a good conversation!

**John L. Martinez**

#1 N.W. M.L.K. Jr. Blvd

Civic Center Complex

Evansville, IN 47708 10/97

30 y.o., Br hair and eyes, 210lbs, 5'10". GWM. Dancing, sports, traveling, motorcycles, horseback riding, romantic dinners, cookouts, country and rock-n-roll, many other interests. Don't like liars, bad breath, traffic jams, doing time, child molesters, phonies.

**Ronald Gregory #494758**

D-2150

Washington Corr. Inst.

4455 Sam Mitchell Dr.

Chipley, FL 32428 11/97

20 y.o. male, bi-curious. Need to be in touch w/others like myself so i can hear that i'm normal whether or not i'm gay. Being gay in prison is hard, but with nobody to share with, it's even harder.

**Robert Colebard**

113045 BI-D-25  
SMU #2  
AZ State Prison Complex Gyman  
PO Box 3400  
Florence, AZ 85232 11/97

Looking for bisexuals and gals. Getting out next year. I'm Bi and in prison in FL.

**William Nesbitt #034032**

Bay Corr. Inst.  
5400 Bayline Drive M216B  
Panama City, FL 32404 11/97

30 y.o. Male, br hair and eyes, 205 lbs, 6'. Looking for companionship, understanding & honesty.

**Clifford Campbell**

D-56026  
PBSP C-12  
PO Box 7500  
Crescent City, CA 95531 11/97

Young white male, 5'6", 152lbs, bro hair & eyes, muscular, tan, Surfer, from Huntington beach, CA. In prison for 4 yrs for embezzlement & fraud. Seeking older white male - must be honest and responsible, to correspond with (lonely, young boy). Please write.

**Mike Conklin #E08845**

Salinas Valley State Prison  
PO Box 1030  
Soledad, CA 93960-1030  
AC-125 11/97

41y.o., 6'2", 190lbs, white male from England. Photography, nudism, hiking, skinny dipping, science fiction. Open-minded and encourage youth emancipation. Widower, 2 grown children.

**Michael Parsons**

PO Box 215  
Maury, NC 28554-0215 11/97

Gay man seeks correspondents in Southern Cal.

**Robert Martinez**

K.28540-2T #232  
PO Box 500  
Jamestown, CA 95237 11/97

26 y.o., Irish/Italian, good shape, honest, never married, no kids, outgoing, outdoors/openminded.

**Chad St. Louis**

900 Highland Ave.  
Cheshire, CT 06410 11/97

Texas jailhouse lawyer, poet, writer, and activist looking to hear from penpals who are not afraid to to know a college educated, data entry worker who is open minded and versatile. I'm into physical fitness by weight training and hatha yoga. 5'11", 167 lbs, loyal and honest, 8" manhood. Just a hippie looking for friendship via writing.

**Chester "Hollywood" Haas III**

TDCJ #327322  
Coffield Unit  
Rt. 1 Nox 150  
Tenn. Colong, TX 75884 11/97

Brown-eyed southern boy, loves Harleys, boys and girls. 5'9", 175 lbs., 45 yrs., Br/br, blind. Due to be released soon.

**Michael J. Sutton**

459428  
Estelle Unit  
Huntsville, TX 77340 11/97

37 y.o., open minded, white male, with many interests.

**Caven Chaudoin J-74893**

Salina Valley State Prison  
Facility B3-122  
PO Box 1040  
Soledad, CA 93960-1040 11/97

6'1", WGM, 27 y.o. Enjoy reading, country music, sports and traveling. In search of gay or bi male that's loving, open, and honest to correspond with and start a friendship and possibly a relationship while I'm down on my luck and to continue upon my release. No head games. Please send photo.

**Greg Warvel 266726**

PO Box 1812  
Marion, OH 43301 12/97

GWM, 41y.o. Will be out in '99 or 2000. 6'2", 245 lbs, br. hair, bl eyes. No prisoners please, but will answer all others.

**Paul Martinez #6807047**

OSP  
2605 State St.  
Salem, OR 97310 12/97

Black male, 38 y.o. Looking for someone to correspond with. ISO gay or bi-wooded males. For companionship &/or fantasy letter exchange. No games. Will answer all.

**Curtis Mangran**

#223778/F/22095  
Florida State Prison  
PO Box 181  
Starke, FL 32091 12/97

SWM, bi, looking for gay man to share letters, friendship, and ideas with. If you are interested, and would like to help a prisoner do his time, please write.

**Robert Newfield #139544**

Florida State Prison  
PO Box 181  
Starke, FL 32091 12/97

Would like to exchange erotic letters with gay and bi females, bi couples, and transsexuals. 32, SWM, bi, 5'10", 180 lbs, light br hair, bl eyes, muscular body, intelligent, open-minded, college degree, financially secure ex-business owner.

**Daniel A. Rogowski**

A.D.C. #108202  
Arizona State Prison  
Eyman, SMU-1  
PO Box 4000  
Florence, AZ 85232 12/97

43 yr-old wm, 5'9", 150 lbs. Blk hair, hazel eyes. Very nice, want to write with gay person in 20s or 30s.

**David Eugene Crouch #189-425**

WCI, PO Box 5500  
Cresaptown MD 21505-5500.  
12/97

## pen pals

28 yr. old SWM, born-again christian. 5'11", 190 lbs, red hair, brn eyes. Seeks fun-loving, encouraging pen pals. I enjoy sports, music, drawing, writing. Will exchange photos.

**Steve Picard #61788**

PO Box 777  
Canon City, CO 81215 12/97

30 yr old WM 5'8", br/bl.  
200 lbs. Work out. Would like a friend to write to.

**Walter Sinclair #18698**

PO Box 400  
Rawlins, WY 82301 12/97

Young, hot-n-horny pretty boy, 22 y.o., Brownish-blond hair, crystal blue eyes, 150, 5'10", HIV neg, bi. Seeking sincere penpals to correspond with — age, looks, gender unimportant. Open minded, affectionate, romantic, witty. Seeking special person to take complete control and care of me.

**Brian Bork #892148**

WCF  
PO Box 0473  
Westville, IN 46391-0473 12/97

28 yr. old bi 170 lbs., 5'8½", br/br. I like all kinds of music, reading, watersports, travel.

**Michael Anders EF**

#383055 F-35  
PO Box 3877  
Jackson, GA 30233 12/97

Very lonely black gay male, 40 yrs., 5'6", slim, 150 lbs, br/br. Med-brown complexion, mild-mannered. Seeks mature, open-minded, caring person for lasting friendship.

**Larry Joel Taylor**

#165-147  
OCI, PO Box 511  
Columbus, OH 43216 12/97

**Women**

29 y.o, 150, muscular, 5'2", long hair, deep brown eyes. Dominate, gay black female who is looking for something real and true. ISO female of any color who likes to be spoiled.

**Carolyn Madry 152016**

C-A 2103  
Jefferson Corr. Inst.  
PO Box 430  
Monticello, FL 32345 9/97

Looking for sweet, wonderful caring woman whose needs may fit my needs. 5'6", mixed, br eyes/hair, 155 lbs. If you are real and sincere, please write. Will answer all.

**Sharon Wilson 3442686**

D-2-22  
Gadsden Corr. Inst.  
PO Box 1769  
Quincy, FL 32353

SWF looking for serious relationship with a loving caring female over 30.

**Janette Michols**

847008  
Jefferson Corr. Inst.  
PO Box 430  
G-B 21211  
Monticello, FL 32344 11/97

51 yr old woman, 5'9", 150 lbs. Seeks a nice female to write, sincere only. I like classical music to relax, and reading. Please, no incarcerated people.

**Mary Ann Round**

#0C4282  
451 Fullerton Ave.  
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1238  
12/97

Single BI F, 33 y.o., sweet, sexy capricorn. 5'2", 145 lbs., big beautiful br eyes, healthy long bl hair.

**Michelle Griffin**

#C698797  
C-09  
Gadsden Corr. Inst.  
PO Box 1769  
Quincy, FL 32353 11/97

The Bromfield Street Educational  
Foundation Presents

# OUTwrite<sup>99</sup>

## The 8th Annual National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Writer's Conference

February 26-28, 1999

The Park Plaza Hotel, Boston MA

Call 1-800-225-2008 by January 26, 1999 for reservations.  
Single/Double: \$135 • Triple: \$150 • Quad: \$165

**2,000 writers, sellers, editors,  
activists, and thinkers will  
converge on Boston February 26th.**

Past **Keynote Speakers** include:

Chrystos

Tony Kushner

Linda Villarosa

Cherrie Moraga

Luis Alfaro

Minnie Bruce Pratt

Edmund White

Cheryl Clarke

Craig Hickman

Nancy Bereano

Craig Lucas

Jewelle Gomez and

Peggy Shaw

## Register at Discount Rates!

Mail this coupon by August 1, 1998 and save \$40 off the on-site registration fee. Pay \$50 now!

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Areas of interest:

☐ YES, register me now for OutWrite '99!

My Visa/MC information is:

Card#

Exp. date:

Signature

OutWrite, Boston Host Committee  
29 Stanhope Street, Boston, MA 02116  
outwrite@bsef.terranel.com

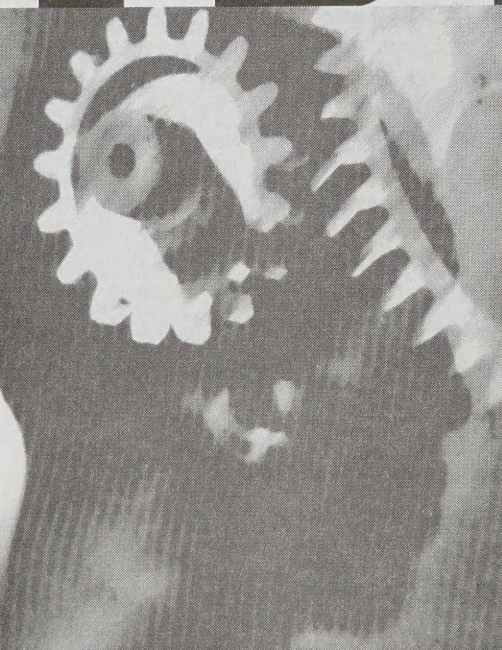
Fax: 617/267-0852

**More info call: 617/262-6969**

# SUBSCRIBE

**Reviews, essays, debates, news analysis, commentary and more... If you believe that critical thinking is needed now more than ever, and if you long for fresh perspectives, hot debates, and dissent from the conservative lockstep of American politics—you need GCN.**

***—Urvashi Vaid***



☐ I enclose \$20 for one year.

☐ I enclose \$35 for two years.

☐ I also want to make an additional, tax deductible contribution of \$

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone ( )

**Send with payment to:**

**GAYCOMMUNITY NEWS**

**29 STANHOPE STREET BOSTON, MA 02116 GCN**